

# THE LIBERTY "76" BOYS OF '76

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

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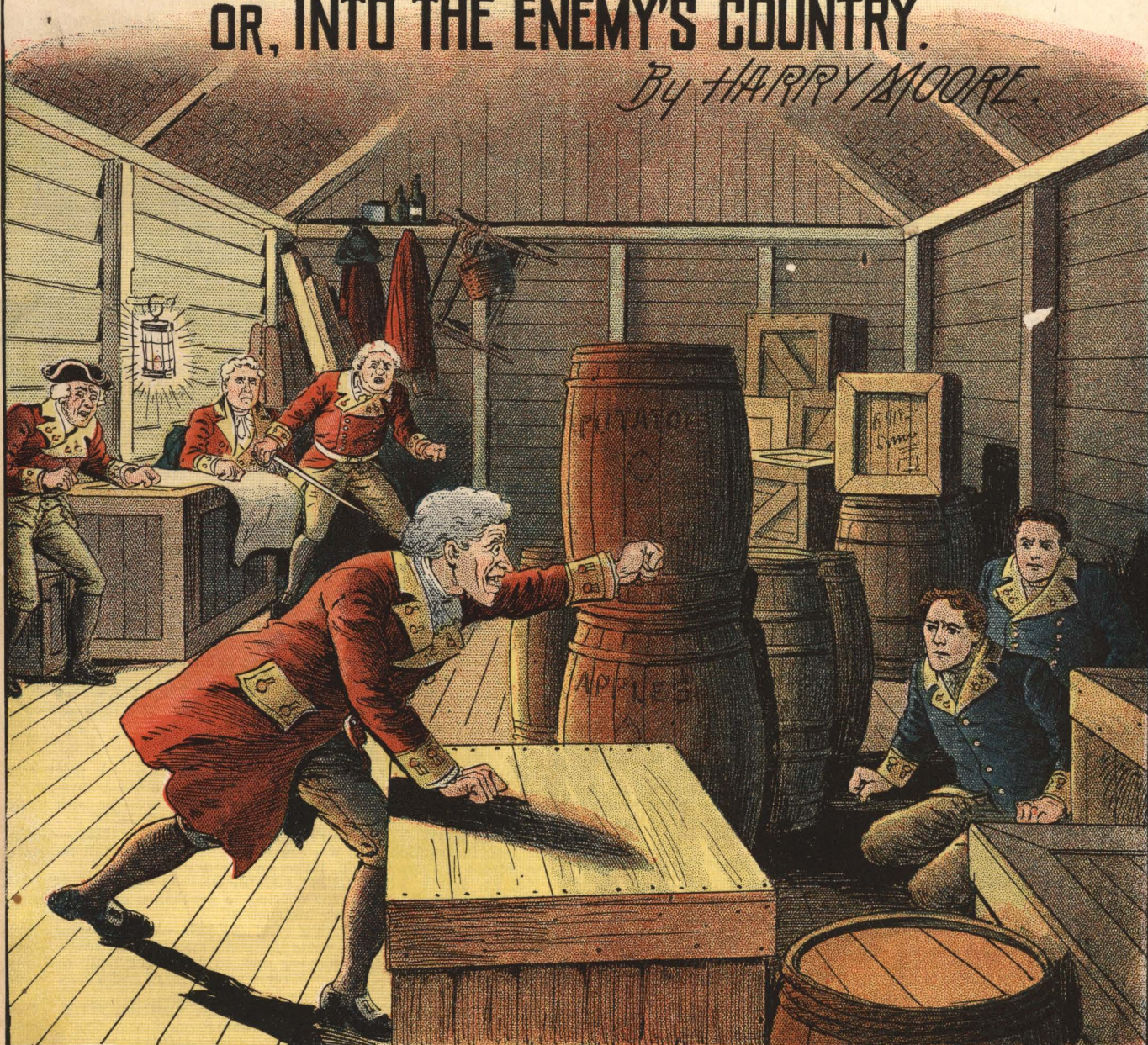
No. 77.

NEW YORK, JUNE 20, 1902.

Price 5 Cents.

## THE LIBERTY BOYS' BOLD MOVE: OR, INTO THE ENEMY'S COUNTRY.

*By HARRY MOORE.*



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## CHAPTER I.

### SENT SOUTH.

It was mid-afternoon of a fine day in the last week of May, of the year 1780. An orderly approached the quarters occupied by the "Liberty Boys," in the patriot encampment on the Hudson, and called out.

"Is Dick Slater here?"

"Here!" cried a handsome young fellow of perhaps twenty years, leaping to his feet. "What is wanted?"

"You are wanted at headquarters."

"Right away?"

"Yes."

"All right; tell the commander-in-chief that I will be there immediately."

"All right;" and the orderly hurried away.

"I wonder what is up now, Dick?" remarked Bob Estabrook, an interested look in his eyes.

"I don't know, Bob."

"I hope there is something in the wind," said Mark Morrison; "this work of sitting around here in camp is so slow to suit me."

"The same here," said Sam Sanderson.

"I don't suppose it is anything that amounts to anything," said Bob, disconsolately.

"You can't tell till it is found out what is wanted," said Tom Harris.

"You are right, Tom," said Dick. "Well, I will go to headquarters and see what the commander-in-chief wants. What is the quickest and easiest way of finding out?"

"You are right, Dick."

Dick Slater hastened away and was soon at headquarters.

"Sit down, Dick," said General Washington, after greeting the youth pleasantly. "I'll be with you in a few moments."

He talked with the orderly a few moments and then sent the fellow away, after which he turned to Dick.

"Well, my boy," he said, "how do you find it here—somewhat dull?"

"Well, yes, slightly dull, your excellency," with a smile.

"I suppose the rest of the boys look at it the same way?"

Dick remembered the conversation that had taken place just before he came to headquarters, and nodded and smiled.

"Yes; they were talking about it just before I left our quarters," Dick said. "They are uneasy under inaction."

"So I supposed. And that is the reason I sent for you in preference to the captain of some company of older men. I have some work which I wish done, and it is work that will require swift moving, and that will test strength, endurance and courage to the utmost."

"Whatever you give us to do, sir, we will do our best to make a success of it."

"I am sure of that, Dick."

"Thank you."

"This is, however, the most dangerous and difficult work that I have ever called upon you to do."

"That does not matter."

"You are ready to attempt it, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"And glad of the opportunity?"

"More than glad."

"I thought so; well, I am glad to know that I have some men in my army who are ready and eager to attempt any work, no matter how difficult and dangerous it may be."

"The livelier the work the better it suits my boys, sir."

"I have seen enough of them and their work to know that, Dick. But this is unusual and extra hazardous."

"What is it you wish us to do, sir, if I may ask?"

The commander-in-chief was silent for a few moments, gazing up at the ceiling, as if in a deep study. Then he said:

"I suppose you know, Dick, that the British are in control of South Carolina?"

"Yes, sir."

"They are carrying things with a high hand down there."

"So I have understood."



"Yes; they are sending out parties, who go from house to house and force the citizens to join the loyalist militia."

"That is what I have been told."

"Yes; and then there are other bands of men, who, having secured commissions from the British, are going about plundering, burning and in many cases murdering."

"I know the breed, sir. They are the cowards, the conscienceless scoundrels who use war as a means to prey upon their fellowmen."

"You are right; well, as I have said, the British have everything their own way in South Carolina, save for what is being done here and there by the patriot partisan commanders, Marion, Sumpter, Pickens and Williams."

"I have met the first two named, sir, as you know. Ah, they are noble-hearted men, and as brave as brave can be."

"They are wonderful men, Dick, and if they had a sufficient force they could make South Carolina untenable by the British."

"So they could, sir."

"And now, Dick, I am coming to the point. I have thought of sending you and your 'Liberty Boys' down into South Carolina, so that you may co-operate with the four partisan leaders mentioned, and help them to organize a patriot militia."

Dick's eyes sparkled. It was plain that he was delighted.

"Oh, sir, I hope you will send us!" he exclaimed.

"You would like to go, then?"

"I would like nothing better, sir!"

"And your 'Liberty Boys'?"

"They would be tickled half to death."

"You think nothing would please them better, eh?"

"I am sure of it, sir."

"Very good; I thought that was how it would be."

There was a tone of satisfaction to the great man's voice. "It is a long trip down there, however, Dick; and it will be extremely dangerous venturing into the enemy's country."

"I know that, sir; it will be a bold move, but that is just what my boys like. They will be eager to start."

"I was sure of it, Dick."

"We can start at an hour's notice, sir, and the length of the journey will have no terrors for us."

"Well, I think I will send you. There is nothing to be done here, and nothing in sight; so you may return to your quarters and begin making arrangements for the journey."

"How soon will you want us to start?"

"There is no particular hurry. I should say for you

to put in the afternoon getting ready, and that you might start in the morning."

"Very well, sir."

"I will write a letter which you will take with you and hand to whichever of the partisan commanders you happen to meet first; it will explain all, and then you can work together."

"Very well, sir; I will go to my quarters and begin making preparations for our journey."

"Do so; and come here in the morning and get the letter."

"I will do so."

After some further conversation Dick saluted and took his departure. The instant he reached the quarters occupied by the "Liberty Boys" they greeted him with a volley of questions.

"What did he want?"

"Did it amount to anything?"

"Are we to have some work to do?"

"Tell us, Dick!"

"Tell us all about it!"

"Yes; and quickly, too."

Such were a few of the exclamations and questions. Dick smilingly waited till they were through, and then he said:

"We are to have some work to do, fellows."

"Are we?"

"Good, good!"

"Hurrah!"

"I hope it is something that will keep us awake!"

"What is the work, old man?"

"You would never guess," replied Dick, still smiling.

"Of course not."

"Then tell us at once!"

"Yes, yes!"

"Don't keep us waiting!"

"We are in suspense, old man!"

"The commander-in-chief is going to send us away on a long journey, boys," said Dick.

"Where to?" from Bob Estabrook.

"Tell us, quick!" from Mark Morrison.

"You'd never guess," said Dick.

A groan went up from the youths.

"Of course we never would guess," said Bob; "and you don't tell us pretty quickly you will never get to do so, either, for we'll jump on you and pound you to death. You shouldn't trifle with us and ruffle up our feelings in this manner, old man!"

Dick laughed. "Well, I'll tell you," he said; "the



commander-in-chief is going to send us down into South Carolina!"

"What's that!"

"You don't mean it?"

"Away down into South Carolina?"

"Phew!"

"Say, that will be a trip, won't it?"

It was evident that the youths were both surprised and delighted. They had hoped that they would be given something to do, but had not expected that they would be sent away on such a long journey.

"Say, Dick, the British have everything pretty much their own way down in South Carolina, don't they?" remarked Bob.

"Yes, Bob."

"I thought so."

"Yes, when we go down there we will be practically going into the enemy's country."

"It will be a bold move!" said Mark Morrison.

"Yes, but bold moves often win where other kinds of moves would fail."

"True; well, I'm not only ready and willing, but eager to go."

"So am I!"

"And I!"

"It's the same with me!"

"And with me!"

"We can't start too quickly to suit me!"

Such were the exclamations.

"By the way, Dick, when will we start?" asked Bob.

"In the morning."

"In the morning, eh?"

"Yes."

"Hurrah!"

"Why not start right away, Dick?" asked Sam Sanderson. "We could get quite a distance yet this afternoon."

"The commander-in-chief is going to write a letter for me to take, and he said come for it in the morning, so we can't start sooner."

"Ah, I see."

"Well, that is all right," said Bob; "we can get off early in the morning and put many miles behind us before daylightfall."

"It is better to start in the morning," said Dick.

"And so we are to go away down into South Carolina!" said Mark Morrison. "What are we going to do when we get there, Dick?"

"We are to hunt up Marion and Sumpter, Pickens and

Williams and co-operate with them and help to organize a patriot militia."

"Ah, I see."

"That will be lively work, I think."

"Probably so."

"And I suppose that incidentally we will strike the British an occasional blow if the opportunity offers, Dick?" said Sam Sanderson.

"Yes, indeed; we will never let a chance go by."

"You are right; we won't!"

"Oh, say, I think I see some lively work ahead of us, down in the enemy's country!" said Bob.

"And you don't have to look very hard to see that, either!" from Tom Harris.

"No; one doesn't have to strain his eyesight," grinned Bob.

It was evident that the "Liberty Boys" were delighted. They fell to discussing the matter and chattered like so many magpies. When they had got through talking, Dick told them that they had better begin making their preparations for the journey.

"There isn't much to do," said Bob.

This was true; but they cleaned their muskets and pistols and rubbed their horses down, and looked to their saddles and bridles to see that everything was in good shape.

It was soon known throughout the camp that the youths were going South on a long and dangerous journey, and the soldiers came to give the boys some cheering words, for the "Liberty Boys" were general favorites.

They held a sort of levee the rest of the afternoon and evening, but went to bed early, as they wished to get a good night's rest.

They were up early, and after breakfast bridled and saddled their horses, and as soon as Dick had returned from headquarters, where he had gone to get the letter and his final instructions, the "Liberty Boys" mounted and rode away toward the South.

They were starting upon what was indeed a bold move; they were headed for the enemy's country.

## CHAPTER II.

### STRANGELY WARNED.

On a beautiful afternoon of the second week in June a lone rider was making his way along the winding road



leading toward Ninety-Six, in the western part of South Carolina.

The country was rough and hilly, and there was almost continuous timber, with here and there a clearing in which was the cabin or more pretentious home of a settler.

The lone rider in question was a young man of perhaps twenty or twenty-one years, and he was handsome, though much bronzed from exposure to the weather. His chin was square and firm, his gray-blue eyes unwavering and clear, and it would have been evident to any good judge of faces that the young man in question was possessed of indomitable courage and an iron will.

The rider was mounted on a magnificent horse, coal black in color. Any one knowing anything at all about horses would have seen at a glance that the animal was one with Arabian blood coursing in his veins.

Suddenly, as the rider was passing between two rather high knolls, the tops of which were almost above him, so narrow was the road between, a stone the size of a man's double-fist struck in front of the horse with a thump, causing the animal to give a snort of terror and half wheel.

"Whoa, Major, old fellow!" said the rider, soothingly. "Don't be afraid."

It was evident that the rider was somewhat alarmed, however, for he half turned in the saddle and gazed up at the top of the knoll, keenly and searchingly.

"That stone didn't fall of its own accord," he said to himself; "some one threw it, and the chances are that whoever that some one was, he tried to hit me a crack on the head."

The youth continued to gaze upward, while the horse pawed the ground nervously and breathed in short, snorting breaths.

One minute, two minutes passed, and a second stone did not come down and there was no movement on the top of the knoll to indicate the presence of any one. Nevertheless the horseman was confident that at least one pair of eyes was watching him closely.

"If it is a redcoat or Tory, I don't see why he didn't shoot me," the youth thought; "and, for that matter, why hasn't he shot me, since throwing the stone, or thrown another at me?"

These were questions which it was impossible to answer, and presently the young man glanced at the stone which had fallen in the road, and gave a start.

"Phew!" he whistled under his breath; "there is a piece of paper tied to the stone! I wonder what that means?"

There was only one possible way to answer this question, and that was by examining the paper, and the youth leaped to the ground and stepped forward and picked the stone up. It was seen at a glance that there was a bit of folded paper, which was tied to the stone with a string.

"Well, this proves that whoever threw the stone did not try to hit me," the young man said to himself; "so I guess I am in no danger, after all. I will see what it all means."

He broke the string, dropped the stone to the ground and unfolded the paper. As he had more than half expected, there was writing on the paper. The writing was not very good, or very plain, being scribbled with the point of a charred stick, seemingly. There were only a few words, and were as follows:

"Dick Slater, go back! If you don't you will lose your life!"

That was all there was; no signature, nothing to indicate who the writer was or whether a friend or an enemy. Dick stared at the writing for several moments, a look of wonder and surprise on his face.

"Now, this is a puzzler," he said to himself; "how in the world did this person, whoever he or she is, know that I am Dick Slater? I don't understand it at all."

The young man was indeed Dick Slater, the famous scout, spy and fighter, and captain of "The Liberty Boys of '76." He looked at the bit of paper and then glanced up at the top of the knoll.

It was easy to see whence the stone had come. Right at the edge of the knoll, where it overhung the road, was a large tree, with some bushes growing at the foot. It was from among those bushes that the stone had come, without doubt.

"I must know more about this matter," Dick said to himself; "I am not satisfied to let it go as it is, at all. I will see if I can get the person who threw the stone and write this warning to talk to me; if I can, I may be able to find out something more."

"Hello, up there!" called out Dick.

There was no reply.

"Hello, I say!" again called out Dick.

Still there was no reply.

"This doesn't suit me at all," murmured Dick. "Hello! hello! you, up there on the hill! Who are you? Show yourself. Step out; I want to have a little talk with you. This time there was an answer.

"It does not matter who I am," came down, in a strange



ly sweet and musical voice. "Be warned, and go back! Your presence, and that of your 'Liberty Boys,' is known, and plans have been made to destroy you—so go back at once. Get out of South Carolina or you will lose your life, and your men will all be killed or driven out."

"Well, well; a girl!" said Dick to himself. Then aloud he said: "I thank you for the warning, miss, but I cannot heed it."

"Oh, but you must!"

"Oh, no!"

"You, or any of your men, will not leave South Carolina alive unless you do it at once!" said the voice. "Be warned and hasten to make your escape."

"I could not think of it, miss."

"But consider: You are in the enemy's country!"

"I know that."

"The idea does not seem to frighten you much." There was a note of admiration in the tone.

"No, it doesn't frighten me a bit, miss," was the quiet reply; "I have been in the enemy's country before."

"But you have never been in such great danger as you are now, I am sure."

"You think not?"

"I am certain that such is the case."

"I take it, miss, that you are my friend, or you would not have taken the trouble to warn me."

"Yes, I am your friend, and the friend of all patriots."

"Then tell me who you are."

"I would rather not."

"Why?"

"I have my reasons."

"But I would very much like to know who you are; and if you are really my friend, I wish you would tell me more than this tells me," holding up the paper. "I will come up and have a talk with you."

"Oh, but I am afraid some one—some enemy of yours might see us."

"I don't think that is likely to happen."

"Perhaps not; but I do not wish to take the chances."

"What harm would it do?"

"It would make it difficult for me to render you aid in the future, for one thing."

"I don't understand."

"It is simple enough; I am the daughter of a Tory, and everybody thinks I am loyal to the king. If they should learn that such is not the case they would watch me and make it impossible for me to render you further aid."

"Ah, I understand; but I really think that there is

more danger of some one hearing us talk than if we were together, don't you?"

"Yes; but—please take heed of the warning and go back at once! Go back to where you have left your 'Liberty Boys,' and then get out of South Carolina. Your presence here and identity are known, and a plan is being formed to destroy or capture you."

"But I cannot do what you say, miss," said Dick, earnestly; "I really can't. We are here, and must stay. We are under orders; but so far as that is concerned we would not leave, anyway. If you would only tell me from which direction the danger threatens, then you would be doing me a real, practical favor and rendering me aid. This warning will otherwise not amount to much, as it is out of the question to think of turning back and leaving South Carolina."

"You mean it? You really will not turn back?"

"I certainly do mean it, miss. I cannot entertain the idea of turning back."

"Then I guess I had better let you come up here, and I will tell you all that I know and make it as safe for you as it is possible for you to be, so long as you remain in this region."

"Thank you, miss; I am much obliged to you for giving me permission to have an interview. I will tie my horse among the trees at the side of the road and then will come right up."

Dick led his horse in among some trees that grew beside the road and tied the animal. Then he began the ascent of the knoll. It was very steep, but Dick was a woodsman, born and bred, and it was not very difficult for him to climb to the top. When he got there he was almost stricken dumb by the sight of the girl, who stood at the foot of the tree awaiting his coming.

The girl, while dressed simply in the coarse, homespun clothing such as was worn by the majority of the people of the South in those time, was yet one of the most beautiful maidens that Dick had ever seen, and he had seen a great many and had a sweetheart up in New York State whom he thought wonderfully beautiful, as indeed she was. But that girl was the peer of any that the young "Liberty Boy" had ever laid eyes on, and he could not help acknowledging that such was the fact. He doffed his hat and bowed.

"I am indeed pleased to meet you, miss," he said; "and now, as you know my name and have the advantage of me, will you not put us on an equal footing by telling me your name?"



"Certainly," replied the girl, blushing, when she saw the admiration in Dick's eyes; "my name is Lucy Lane."

Dick stepped forward and gave the girl his hand. "Miss Lucy, you have been so kind as to warn me," he said, "and I am your friend for life. But now will you tell me from what direction I am to look for danger?"

At this instant there came an interruption. A man bounded out from behind a tree and confronted the two. He was not such a bad-looking fellow, at first glance, but a closer look would reveal the fact that he was a man possessed of a cruel and vindictive nature, and that he was not a man to be trusted. He did not pay any attention to Dick; his eyes were on the face of Lucy Lane, and they burned with the fury of a fiercely jealous nature.

"So, this is the way you do, is it, Lucy Lane?" he hissed. "You, the daughter of Joe Lane, the leader of the loyal forces in these parts, to warn a rebel that he is in danger and then to calmly permit him to hold an interview with you for the purpose of telling him all you know about the plans which have been made for his death or capture! So that is the way you do, is it? And all because you saw that he had a handsome face! Ha! do you know, girl, that I could kill you with a good grace?" and the fellow leaped forward and seized Lucy by the wrist and glared fiercely into her eyes.

The girl uttered a cry of terror and shrank back, at the same time she glanced in Dick's direction as if to implore his help. The man saw the glance, and his rage became almost uncontrollable.

"Oh, look at him!" he hissed. "Of course, he is your champion, now, and you expect that he will do wonders in your behalf; but I tell you there doesn't live any one man who is a match for Bob Benderson! You will look, but that is all the good it will do you!"

Dick Slater's eyes flashed fire, and he took a quick step forward.

"Unhand the lady!" he said, in a cold, firm voice.

The man who had called himself Bob Benderson turned his head and glared at Dick in a manner which reminded the youth of a tiger.

"Were you speaking to me?" he snarled.

"To no one else."

"And you ordered me—me—to unhand the lady?"

"That is just what I ordered you to do—and I want you to do it, too, and quickly!"

There was such a peculiar, menacing look in the youth's eyes that Benderson was impressed, and he let go of Lucy's wrist and slowly turned till he faced Dick, never removing his eyes from the youth for an instant.

"You talk and look like a fellow who thinks himself a warrior!" he said, slowly, but in a menacing tone.

"That is neither here nor there," said Dick, quietly; "I simply will not stand by and see a brute offer violence to a woman, that is all."

A red glow came into the eyes of Bob Benderson, and he seemed to be gathering himself together after the fashion of a tiger getting ready to make its spring.

"Did I understand you to apply the epithet of brute to me—me!—Bob Benderson?" he hissed.

"I don't know what you understood," calmly; "I know that I applied the epithet to you, however, and I know further, that you deserved it."

"Oh, you do, eh?"

"Yes."

Dick understood that a struggle was at hand. He knew full well that the man was going to attack him; and he judged also by what the fellow had said, and from the manner in which he had acted, that he was a dangerous man. A glance at Lucy showed him that she looked pale and frightened, and this proved that she thought Benderson a dangerous individual. But Dick was on his guard and while seemingly standing in a careless attitude, was ready for a lightning-like movement when the necessity should come.

"So you think I am a brute?" The tone was even and deadly, and there was a dangerous light in the man's eyes.

"I don't think so; I know it!" Dick was not averse to bringing the affair to a head, so spoke promptly and aggressively.

"Oh, you know it?" Still more deadly and threatening the tone.

"Yes."

"Very well—I will show you what a brute can do!" and with the words Benderson leaped at Dick with the ferocity of a tiger.

### CHAPTER III.

#### A TERRIBLE FALL.

He thought to seize Dick, of course, and did get hold of him, but he did not get the hold he had intended to get. Dick had evaded the fellow, partially, and had secured a hold that enabled him to withstand the other without great difficulty.



He was to learn, however, that Benderson was indeed a dangerous man, for the fellow, maddened by being foiled in securing the grasp he intended to secure, went to work like a fiend, and struggled so fiercely that he managed to secure a better hold than at first, and was in much better shape to force matters.

Dick was not at all alarmed, as he felt that he was more than a match for the man, but he was puzzled to know what to do. He made up his mind, presently, that he would do just as much as was necessary in self-defense, and no more, as he did not know how Lucy might look upon it if he were to kill or seriously injure the man.

As for Lucy, she was terrified and stood, with clasped hands and staring eyes, watching the struggling men. She seemed unable to say a word; all she could do was to watch in mute terror.

Benderson, having partially retrieved his first failure, was now more confident than ever, and pushed the attack with vigor.

"Do you know what I am going to do with you, you rebel dog?" he asked, pantingly.

"No; what are you going to do with me, you Tory hound?" asked Dick.

"I am going to throw you over the bluff!"

"Oh, you are?"

"Yes!" in a fierce, snarling tone.

"I am much obliged to you for telling me."

"You needn't be."

"Why not?"

"The knowledge won't be of any use to you."

"It won't?"

"No."

"I think it will."

"Bah! I have you at my mercy."

"You think so?"

"I know it!"

"I think you are mistaken."

"You will find that I am not. There is no one in all this region who is my equal in a hand-to-hand contest."

"That may be, but you see I am not a man of this region."

"That doesn't matter; I have you at my mercy, just the same."

"I guess you are just talking in the hope that you can care me into thinking I am beaten when I am not."

"No, I know what I am talking about."

"I am quite certain that you do not. You cannot throw me over the bluff."

"I'll show you!"

Benderson made desperate efforts to get Dick over to the edge of the bluff, but found the youth to be as immovable, almost, as a stone wall. The fellow was strong, however, and desperate and he managed, by throwing all his weight against Dick, to force him backward a pace, and the youth's foot caught in a trailing vine and he staggered and came very near falling. A cry of terror and fear for Dick's safety escaped the lips of Lucy.

The cry from Lucy seemed to enrage Benderson, he realizing that it was on his opponent's account that the cry had been uttered, and with a snarl of rage he went fiercely to work to follow up his advantage and throw Dick over the bluff.

Benderson managed to force Dick back till they were within a few feet of the edge of the bluff, and there the youth managed to regain his balance and hold his own. They struggled there for a minute at least, without either getting any advantage, and this made the fellow very angry. He had thought that he was going to be successful in forcing Dick over, and to be balked in this fashion enraged him.

"You put up a good fight, but I'll get you, just the same!" grated Benderson.

"I don't think you will," retorted Dick. The youth was on his mettle now. He had come within an ace of being worsted, through an accident, and he was determined that it should not happen a second time.

"You are as good as dead!" snarled Benderson. Doubtless he fancied that on account of his youth Dick would be unnerved by having his opponent speak so confidently; but it happened that Dick was a veteran, even though young yet, and he was not to be frightened by words.

"I fear you are doing some boasting that is unwarranted," said Dick, calmly.

"You think so?" sneeringly.

"Yes; I am worth a dozen dead men yet."

"You may think so, but you are badly mistaken."

"You will see whether I am mistaken or not before we are through with this."

"And so will you!"

All the time this talk was going on Benderson was working hard, striving to get the advantage of Dick and force him over the bluff. But the youth was on his guard, and foiled the man's attempts. This made Benderson very angry, and he worked harder than ever.

"I'll put you over!" he grated. "I'll put you over before many more minutes have passed!"

"I fear you are destined to be disappointed," said Dick, coolly and calmly.



"No, I'm not!"

Then Benderson suddenly made a terrible onslaught on Dick, and did his best to put the youth over the bluff. Dick began to realize that it was to be his life or the other man's, and much as he hated to do so he decided that he would have to save himself by putting Benderson over the bluff. He made up his mind to ask Lucy a question before doing so, however.

"Miss Lucy," he said, "would you grieve if I should throw this fellow over the bluff and kill him?"

"No, no!" was the prompt reply. "If you don't throw him over he will throw you over, so do it if you can! Save your life; I care nothing for him."

A hoarse roar of rage escaped the lips of Benderson, as he heard these words. The truth was that he was a suitor for the hand of Lucy Lane, and to hear her speak thus was hard for him to bear; he at once made a desperate effort to force Dick over the edge of the bluff, and the youth now played the trick on Benderson that he had had in mind from the first. He was, of course, braced so as to withstand the other's onslaught, and while his opponent was still pushing at him with all his might, Dick suddenly stopped resisting and gave way, at the same time giving Benderson a jerk and a swing. The result was that the fellow was thrown clear over the bluff, a terrible cry of terror going up from his lips as he disappeared from sight. As for Dick, he fell and would have gone over the bluff had he not caught hold of some bushes and held on like grim death. Even as it was the lower portion of his body went over, but the youth retained his grasp on the bushes and was saved.

A cry of terror escaped Lucy, and she leaped forward as if to lend Dick assistance, but he told her not to be afraid. "I can pull myself up," he said; "I'll be with you in just a moment."

Dick brought all his strength into play and drew himself up and over the edge of the bluff, and a few moments later he was standing beside the girl, who was pale and trembling.

"Oh, Mr. Slater, do you suppose that he—that he—is—is—dead?" she asked, nodding toward the edge of the bluff and shuddering.

"I fear that such is the case, Miss Lucy," was the reply; "it must be one hundred feet to the ground, and I don't see how he could escape being killed by the fall."

"It is terrible to think of," the girl murmured; "but it will be better for—for me—and for you—if—if he is dead."

Dick stepped to the edge of the bluff and looked down. At this point it was almost a perpendicular wall, the face

of the bluff being smooth and unbroken. There was no outjutting ledges for staying the descent of anything or anybody. Benderson must have gone clear to the bottom.

At that point were some trees and scraggy bushes, but they would scarcely afford enough in the way of a cushion to save the man's life. Still, Dick thought that such a thing might have happened.

"I will go down and see whether or not the man is dead," he said to Lucy; "you stay here till I come back."

"Very well," replied the girl, and she shuddered again.

Dick made his way down the bluff, going in the round about course that he had traversed in coming up, and five minutes later he was at the foot of the bluff at a point right under where Benderson had come over the bluff a hundred feet above.

He found Benderson lying in a heap, but the man was not dead. He was terribly injured, however, and Dick was sure that he had not long to live. The youth straightened the man's form out in a more comfortable fashion and then took off his coat and placed it under the man's head.

"I'm—much—obliged," the injured Tory said, in a weak jerky voice; "but—it— isn't—any—use. It—is—all over with me."

"Perhaps not," said Dick, encouragingly; "perhaps you will pull through, all right."

"No; it's—all over—with—me. But I—don't—care—plain."

"I am sorry," said Dick, gently; "I would not have thrown you over the bluff if there had been any other way out of it. I saw you intended to put me over and had to do it in self-defense."

"I don't—blame—you," was the reply; "of—course—any one—will—fight to—save—himself."

"Is there anything I can do for you?"

"No."

"Do you want water?"

"No, I'm—not—thirsty."

Dick saw the pallor of death stealing over the man's face, and again asked, softly:

"Is there anything I can do for you? If so, name it and I will do it."

Benderson seemed to realize that the end was near. He looked up into Dick's face and seemed to read there the confirmation of his own thoughts regarding the matter.

"I—guess—I—won't last—much—longer."

"Perhaps it isn't so bad as that," said Dick, but he could not put a confident tone into his voice.

Benderson smiled faintly. And then an extremely soft



and anxious look appeared on his face. He seemed about to speak, then hesitated and then did speak.

"If—you—will," he said, feebly, "I wish—that—you would—tell—Lucy—that I—would like—to—see—her before—I—go."

There was such an appealing look in the man's eyes that Dick felt sorry for him and said, promptly: "I'll call her down at once."

"Thank—you!"

Dick stepped out into the road and looked up. He saw Lucy, who was holding to some bushes and leaning over and looking down.

"Will you come down, Miss Lucy?" Dick called out.

"For—for—what, Mr. Slater?" asked the girl, somewhat falteringly.

"He wishes to see you, Miss Lucy, before—before—he goes."

"Then he is—is——"

"I fear so," replied Dick; "he asked for you, and if you can do so I wish you would come down. He is now at a point where no man or woman can call themselves his enemy."

"I will come," said Lucy, in a firm voice.

"Very well; be careful and do not fall, the path isacherous."

"I am not afraid. I am used to such work."

Then Dick returned to the side of Benderson and found a paler and breathing with difficulty. There was a pleased look on his face, however.

"I—heard," he said, in a faint, husky voice; "she's—haoming!"

Perhaps five minutes passed and then Lucy, pale and frightened-looking, appeared. She stopped involuntarily and stood, trembling in a frightened manner, and gazed upon the face of Benderson with dilating eyes.

The dying man turned his eyes upon the girl's face and his own face lighted up for a moment. He made an attempt to reach out his hands toward the girl, but was too weak and could not lift them.

"Lucy," he said, huskily, "I wanted—to—see—you—that—I—could—ask you—to—forgive—me. Can you—ill—you—do—it?"

"Of course I will forgive you, Mr. Benderson," said Lucy, promptly; "I have nothing particular to forgive, though, save the scare which you gave me up on the bluff, little while ago."

"I—caught—you by—the arm—and—hurt you."

"No, no; it did not hurt. You frightened me, that is all; and I freely and fully forgive you, Mr. Benderson."

The man looked at the girl wistfully. "Please—call—me—Bob—won't you—Lucy? Just—once!"

"Why, certainly—Bob," was the reply, and then with a smile on his face Benderson gave one convulsive shudder—and was dead.

A little cry of terror escaped the lips of Lucy. "Oh, Mr. Slater, is he—is—he—dead?" she almost gasped.

"Yes, Miss Lucy," was the sober reply; "I am sorry that you had to witness this unpleasant sight, but he seemed to want to see you so bad that I could not refuse to call you."

"Oh, I am glad that you did!" quickly. "I feel better than I would had I known that he wished to see me and had not got to do so."

"Hello! what's going on here?" suddenly called out a gruff voice, and Dick and the girl whirled—to see a dozen rough-looking men standing in the road, not fifteen feet distant.

## CHAPTER IV.

### IN THE HANDS OF THE TORIES.

Dick sized the newcomers up quickly.

"They are mountain Tories, I'll wager!" he said to himself. Then he glanced at Lucy and saw that she knew the men, or some of them at least.

"Oh, father!" the girl cried, before Dick could speak. "Bob Benderson is dead!"

"Whut's thet ye say, Lucy?" cried the man who had first spoken, and who was evidently the leader of the party. "Ye say Bob is dead?"

"Yes, father."

Exclamations of surprise and dismay escaped the lips of the men.

"Bob dead!"

"Thet's too bad!"

"Et's turrible!"

"How did et happen?" asked the man whom Lucy had addressed as father. As he spoke he glanced at Dick, searchingly, and, the youth was sure, somewhat suspiciously.

"He fell over the bluff, father."

Dick was silent, and his face gave no clew to his thoughts, but he was filled with admiration for the girl and was grateful to her, for he understood that she was trying to get him out of a dangerous predicament. He understood



full well that if these rough men were to learn that he had been the cause of Benderson's death they would kill him.

"Bob fell over ther bluff, ye say?" Mr. Lane was evidently puzzled; he could not understand the affair at all.

"Yes, father."

"How did he come ter fall over?"

"He leaned too far over and lost his balance and fell."

"Leaned too fur over?"

"Yes."

"Whut did he do thet fur?"

"He was talking to me."

"Torkin' ter ye?"

"Yes."

"Whur wuz ye?"

"I was down here in the road."

"Humph! Whur wuz ye goin'?"

"Home."

"Hum, hey?"

"Yes."

"Whur hed ye be'n?"

"Over to Lizzie Slavens' house."

"Over ter Lizzie's, hey?"

"Yes, father."

"Humph! An' wuz—this heer young feller—this heer stranger with ye when Bob fell over ther bluff?"

"No, father; he came along only a few minutes ago."

"Arter Bob hed fell over?"

"Yes."

"I reckon ye hedn' be'n up on ther bluff, had ye?" Joe Lane addressed the question directly to Dick.

The youth shook his head. "No, I had not been up there," he replied. He felt that all was fair in war times.

"Humph!" grunted the man. Then he strode forward and looked down upon the still form of Benderson.

"Yas, he's dead, fast ernuff," he muttered; "he's dead ez er door-nail—ez he couldn't he'p bein' arter tumblin' down off'n ther bluff!" and he glanced upward.

Then he turned toward Dick and asked: "Whut's yer name?"

"David Burrows," was the youth's reply, without an instant's hesitation.

"Humph! Whur ye boun' fur?"

"Going over into Georgia."

"Hedded fur 'Gusta, hey?"

"Yes."

"Whut made ye stop heer?"

"Your daughter—I suppose this young lady is your daughter—called to me as I came riding along, and asked

me to help her, and I did so. The man was beyond all help, however, and soon died."

"I sh'd say so, arter fallin' over ther bluff!" Then he turned toward Lucy.

"Ye say Bob wuz torkin' ter ye, Lucy?" he asked.

"Yes, father."

"An' thet while he wuz leanin' over an' lookin' down an' torkin' ter ye he lost his balance an' fell over?"

"Yes."

"Humph!" grunted Mr. Lane, knitting his eyebrows "thet seems mighty funny ter me. Bob is an ole mountaineer, born an' raised, an' I wouldn't never hev been leeved thet he would fall over er bluff jes' fur nothin' Et's mighty queer."

Lucy did not reply, and Dick did not think it would do any good for him to say anything, so he, too, kept still.

Mr. Lane was silent for a few moments, thinking, and then he turned to the men and said: "Bob, Tom, Joe an' Sam, ye take up Bob's body an' kerry et ter his house."

"All right," replied the four, and they stepped forward and lifted the still form of the dead man.

"Ennythin' Bob's folks want ye ter do, do fur 'em, ordered Mr. Lane.

"All right," replied one.

"An' ef theer hain't nothin' thet they want ye ter do cum ter my house."

The men nodded and then took their departure, going slowly away up the road, carrying the dead man. As soon as they were gone Dick took up his coat and donned it. The realization that the young stranger had taken off his coat and converted it into a pillow for Benderson, seemed to make an impression on Mr. Lane, and his hard face softened a bit, and he said:

"Et's purty nigh supper-time, stranger, an' I'll be glad ter hev ye stay over night with me. Will ye cum erlong uv us?"

Dick noted a sober look on the face of the girl, but he knew he would have to stop for the night somewhere, and decided to stop at Lucy's home. He could be sure that he had one friend there, anyway.

"I shall be glad to take advantage of your kind invitation," said Dick.

"All right," shortly; "git yer hoss an' cum erlong."

Dick entered the clump of trees and soon emerged leading his horse, at sight of which exclamations of wonder and admiration escaped the lips of the mountaineers.

"Say, thet's er fine hoss, stranger!" said one.



"Ther slickest critter thet ever I laid eyes on!" from another, his eyes glistening greedily and enviously.

"Thet hain't no common hoss, I take et," from another.

"Theer's good blood in thet animile, an' I'll bet on et!" said Mr. Lane. "Hain't thet so, Mr. Burrows?"

"Yes," replied Dick; "he has Arabian blood in his veins."

"I knowed et!" with a nod. "I'd like ter own er hoss like thet."

"Still, he is not really so good for work among the mountains as the rough horses of common blood," said Dick.

"No, I guess not; he's too fine fur ther rough work."

"But I'll bet he kin run like er streak!" said another.

"Yes, he can get over the ground pretty fast," smiled Dick.

"I'll bet ye he kin!"

Dick did not exactly like the attention which the men ere bestowing on Major. The men were rough fellows, who would be capable of almost any crime, he was sure, and if they took too great a liking to the horse it might result in trouble. He noticed, too, that there was a sober look on Lucy's face, and made up his mind that she was ther anxious also.

"Oh, well, I will just have to keep my eyes open, that all," he said to himself; "I have been in many dangerous places, and I am not much afraid but that I will be able to get through this, all right."

The party started down the road, now, Dick noting that two of the men walked in front and four behind, he and Lucy being between. He walked along, with the horse's idle-rein thrown over his arm, and talked carelessly with them, however, and no one would have suspected that he noticed the arrangement of the men. Dick understood at the Tories feared he might take it into his head to jump into the saddle and bolt, if he was given the opportunity, and they were not willing that he should go, for reasons of their own.

It was only about a half mile to the home of Joe Lane, and when they got there Dick went to the stable with Mr. Lane and helped unbridle and unsaddle and feed Major.

"Yes, yes, thet's er nice hoss!" said Mr. Lane, pausing at the door and looking back at Major; "I never seen ez tidy an' slick er critter in all my life. Whur did ye git er, Mr. Burrows?"

"Up North."

"Up North, hey?"

"Yes."

"I thort so. We hain't got no sech hosses ez thet down here in these parts."

Then the two made their way to the house, and Dick noticed that only two of the men were there; the other six had taken their departure.

"Ther res' uv ther boys went hum, did they?" asked Joe Lane, and the two nodded.

"All right; but ye two mus' stay an' take supper with us."

The two, who were young fellows of not to exceed twenty-one to twenty-two years of age, nodded and looked pleased. Dick was a shrewd young fellow and he at once guessed that here were a couple of young men who would be only too glad to have Lucy Lane smile upon them. Then Mr. Lane turned to Dick and said:

"Make yerself ter hum, young feller; I've got er leetle work ter do, but'll be in when supper is reddey."

With this Mr. Lane left the house and made his way in the direction of the hill or knoll where Benderson had met his death. "Theer's sumthin' funny erbout thet bizness," the man muttered; "I wouldn't hev berleeved thet Bob'd a-fell over ther bluff without sumthin' ter make 'im do et, an' I'm goin' ter go up theer an' take er look aroun'. Mebby I kin fin' sumthin' thet'll 'xplain ther mystery."

Fifteen minutes later he reached the top of the knoll and began a careful examination. Mr. Lane was an old mountaineer and woodsman, used to reading things in tracks, in trampled grass, in a hundred different ways, and where one not so skilled would not see anything at all, and he had not been long at work before an exclamation escaped him.

"I thort so!" he muttered. "Bob didn't fall over ertall; he wuz throwed over! An' not till arter theer hed be'n quite er struggle, fur look how ther groun' is tore up! Yas, he wuz throwed over, but I wouldn't hev berleeved thet theer wuz enny wun man livin' thet could hev done thet. I wonder ef theer wuz more'n wun ag'in 'im?"

Mr. Lane made a careful examination, and finally stood erect and shook his head.

"Theer wuz on'y wun feller fought with Bob," he muttered; "but I kain't unnerstan' et. I'd never hev berleeved thet wun feller could hev throwed 'im over. Bob must hev slipped er sumthin' thet giv' ther other feller ther advantage."

The man was silent for a few moments, pondering, and then he shook his head again and a dark frown came over his face.

"Lucy sed ez how she wuz down in ther road, an' thet Bob wuz leanin' over ther edge uv ther bluff, torkin' ter her, an' thet he lost his balance an' fell over; but I know,



frum whut I've seen heer, thet et hain't so; Lucy hez tole me er story! But whut fur?"

Mr. Lane was silent again, and pondered for quite a while.

"I wunder ef thet young feller thet calls 'imself Dave Burrows throwed Bob over?" he asked himself. "Ef thet is ther way uv et, then Lucy mus' hev be'n up heer, too. I'll look around and see if I can find her footprints."

He began a careful search, and presently an exclamation escaped his lips.

"Yas, heer air her footprints!" he cried. "She wuz up heer when ther struggle took place, an' knows all erbout et—and I guess theer hain't no doubt but whut thet young feller done et. But why sh'd Lucy want ter purtect 'im, I wonder?"

This was a puzzler, but finally the man nodded his head.

"I guess thet's et," he muttered; "he's er good-lookin' feller, an' Lucy, gal-like, took er sudden notion ter 'im, an' made up her min' ter save 'im. Waal, she kain't do et! Mr. Dave Burrows'll hev ter answur fur killin' Bob Benderson, ez shore ez my name is Joe Lane!"

As he spoke the man smacked his right fist into his left hand, making a noise like a pistol shot, and a person who was hidden behind a tree at no great distance, and had been watching the actions of the man, jumped in affright and almost gave utterance to a startled exclamation. This person was Lucy Lane. She had seen her father leave the house and go in the direction of the knoll, and half suspecting what his errand was she had followed him cautiously and had been a witness to nearly everything he had done, and had overheard much that he had said.

"Goodness!" she said to herself. "What shall I do? I fear that Mr. Slater will get into serious trouble if he stays at our house over night. I must manage to warn him and then he may be able to escape."

The girl, fearing that her father might start back to the house immediately and discover her presence, hastened away, being careful not to make any noise or let herself be seen. She reached the house before her father emerged from the timber a quarter of a mile distant, and so he did not suspect that he had been watched.

Mr. Lane had been turning things over in his mind as he walked along, and suddenly an exclamation escaped his lips: "Great guns! why didn' I think uv thet sooner? Et's him—et's Dick Slater, an' I'll bet on et! Et's ther very feller we've be'n makin' arrangements ter welcum ter these parts, an' he's heer, alreddy, an' none uv us suspekcted et! An' now ther question is, does Lucy know thet he is Dick Slater?"

Mr. Lane puzzled over this question, but was unable to answer it satisfactorily. He was aware that his daughter's loyalty was not to be depended on. His wife, too, was rather in sympathy with the patriot cause. These facts were known to the man and had caused him considerable worry and vexation of spirit, but so far it had not caused him any real trouble.

"I'll hev ter purten' thet I don't hev enny suspishun uv who ther young feller is," the man thought; "thet kin fool Lucy, an' she won't think he is in enny danger an' so won't warn 'im. Yas, thet'll be ther bes' plan."

Then Joe Lane thought that it might be possible that the young man might slip out early in the night and make his escape, and so he decided that as soon as the four men returned from Benderson's they would make the capture so as to be sure of it.

He entered the house and got ready for supper, and then, it being ready, all sat up to the table and ate heartily. Mr. Lane talking and laughing in a jolly fashion which was intended to allay any suspicions which the young stranger might have.

They had just finished supper when the four men arrived, and as they had not yet had their supper they went up to the table. Mr. Lane, under the pretence of asking them some questions regarding the Bendersons, told the four men that he was sure the young stranger was Dick Slater, the "rebel" spy and captain of the company "Liberty Boys," and that, moreover, he was certain that the young fellow had thrown Benderson over the bluff.

"We mus' make er pris'ner uv 'im," he said, in a low tone, when neither his wife nor Lucy were in the kitchen, "as soon as you hev finished yer supper, come inter the settin'-room, an' when I giv' ther signal, jump onter thet youngster an' make er pris'ner uv 'im. Ye unnerstan'?"

The men nodded, and when they had finished their supper they walked carelessly into the sitting-room where Dick, Mr. Lane, the other two Tories and Mrs. Lane and Lucy were.

Dick was, for once, off his guard. He was not anticipating an attack, and when suddenly the four men leaped upon him he was taken entirely by surprise. He struggled fiercely, but to no avail, and in less than a minute he was a prisoner, his arms being bound tight and fast.

## CHAPTER V.

### LUCY'S DARING RIDE.

"What does this mean?" he asked.

The Tory leader laughed.



"Whut does et mean, d'ye ax?" he said, with a leer.

"Yes; what does it mean?"

"Et means thet ye air er pris'ner."

"I realize that, of course."

"I sh'd think ye would!" with a grin.

"What I meant was, why have you made me a prisoner?"

"Oh, thet wuz et?"

"Yes."

"Waal, ye see, et's this way: We happen ter know thet ye air Dick Slater, an'——"

Dick burst out laughing. "What! I Dick Slater?" he cried. "You must be crazy!"

"No, I hain't crazy. Yer Dick Slater; ye know et, an' I know et, so theer hain't no use fur ye ter try ter deny et."

"Oh, I won't bother to deny it; if you know I am Dick Slater it would be useless—but I don't see how you can possibly know anything of the kind."

"Waal, et's simple enuff."

"How is it?"

"Waal, ye see, we knowed ye wuz comin' down this way."

"Oh, you did?"

"Yas; we hed advance informashun, ye know, so et is easy enuff ter put two an' two tergether."

"It seems to you that it is easy and simple, no doubt; but you must remember that you can't be certain of a thing unless you have absolute knowledge. Now, it is probable at this Dick Slater you speak of is fifty miles from here, while you are fooling yourself with the idea that I am he."

"Thet's all very easy ter say," doggedly; "but yer Dick Slater, jes' ther same; an' we've got ye tight an' fast."

"The last part of your statement is true, at any rate."

"Yas, an' ther furst part uv et, too. An' theer's erther thing, Mr. Slater."

"Well, what is it?"

"Ye throwed Bob Benderson over ther bluff!"

"What's that you say! I threw Benderson over the bluff?"

"Yas."

Dick looked at the man with unflinching eyes. "How you know that?" he asked.

"Because I was up on top uv ther bluff erwhile ergo an' aw whur ye hed er scrimmage, an' I put two an' two terher an' figgered out thet ye hed throwed Bob over. I owed he didn't fall over uv his own accord."

"But your daughter's statement!" said Dick, protestly.

The man made a grimace and then grinned. "Gals n't be 'xpeckted ter see things ez they reelly happen," said.

"Oh, then you think your daughter was mistaken?"

"Yas, she wuz mistook. I s'pose she thort thet Bob fell over, but he didn't; he wuz throwed over."

"Well, even granting that, how do you know I did it?"

"Becos theer hain't nobuddy else in these parts thet would hev done et."

"You cannot know that, positively; you are only surmising it. It is possible that there are half a dozen persons in these parts who would have thrown Bob Benderson over the bluff, if they had got the chance."

Mr. Lane shook his head. "Ye done et, an' ye hev gotter answer fur et!" he growled.

"Well, of course, you have me at your mercy and can do what you like with me," said Dick; "if I may ask, what will you do with me?"

"Ye would reelly like ter know?" with a leer.

"Yes."

"Waal, I think thet we'll wait till ter-morrer an' then we'll take ye ter ther bluff an' throw ye over ther same ez ye did Bob!"

Dick shuddered slightly, for the man's tone showed that he meant what he said; a glance at Lucy's pale face showed Dick that she believed her father was in deadly earnest. The sight of Lucy gave Dick an idea, however, and a faint ray of hope. He knew that the girl was his friend and he thought that it might be possible that she would be able to aid him to escape before morning should come.

"How d'ye think ye'll like thet?" asked the man, after a few moments' silence, Dick not having made answer.

"There can be but one answer to that question," was Dick's reply.

"Ye won't like et, hey?"

"I should say that I will not like it."

"I guess thet poor Bob didn't like et, either, but he couldn't he'p 'imself; he went over, jes' ther same."

"It is undoubtedly a fact that he went over, and that he could not help himself; had he been able to do so he would have kept from going over, without doubt."

"An' ye throwed 'im over!"

"You have no proof that I did it."

"Waal, theer hain't nobuddy else ez could hev done et."

Dick said no more. He realized that it would be useless. The Tories were sure that he was Dick Slater, and that he had thrown Benderson over the bluff, and no amount of denying would do any good. Dick decided to take matters coolly and await developments.

Suddenly an idea came to Joe Lane and he stepped forward and began searching Dick. He felt in the youth's pockets and presently found the letter which General Wash-



ington had given Dick, and which was to have been given to Marion, Sumpter, Pickens or Williams.

"Ah, ha! whut hev we heer?" Mr. Lane cried. "Er letter, an' I'll bet thet et'll prove thet this feller is Dick Slater!"

He tore it open and read it. This was slow work, for he was evidently not much of a scholar, but he managed to become master of the contents, and he slapped his thigh in delight.

"I knowed et!" he cried. "I knowed et! This heer letter settles et. Ye air Dick Slater, jes' ez I thort, an' ye air down heer on ther bizness thet we wuz told ye wuz comin' ter 'tend ter. But ye won't do nothin'; ye won't never live ter meet ther 'Swamp Fox,' er Sumpter, Pickens er Williams. Ye'll end yer days right heer!"

"You think so?" said Dick, calmly.

"I'm shore uv et!"

"Sure things are sometimes uncertain, you know."

"Theer won't be nothin' onsartin' erbout this. Ye air doomed, Mr. Dick Slater, rebel spy!"

"I won't give up all hope just yet a while."

"Thet's all right; ye kin hope all ye want, but et won't do ye enny good."

When bedtime came Dick was conducted to a room upstairs. He was placed on a bed in one corner and his feet were bound so that he could not move. In addition, a man was left on guard at the door.

"Ye kain't escape," said Joe Lane; "we air goin' ter stan' guard over ye all night, an' in ther mornin' we'll make an end uv ye, ther same ez ye did uv Bob."

Dick made no reply. He knew it would do no good; but when the man had left the room and closed the door, leaving him alone, he did a good deal in the way of thinking.

Dick realized that he was in a tight place. True, he had a friend in the house, but that friend was a weak girl, and what could she hope to do against six grown men? And she could not set him free by stealth, as there was one of the men on guard at the door. No matter how he looked at the affair it had a bad look for him.

Still Dick did not despair; he was a brave youth, and had been in so many tight places in his time that he did not know what it was to give up all hope. He had escaped before, and why not again?

While Dick was thinking and going over the situation the men who had captured him were down in the sitting-room congratulating themselves on their success in capturing the great "rebel" scout, spy and captain of "The Liberty Boys of '76."

And while they talked Mrs. Lane and Lucy, out in the kitchen, were discussing the matter also. Lucy had told her mother the whole story of how she had warned Dick Slater of the danger into which he was entering in coming to the region, and how he had come up onto the knoll to talk to her and had gotten into a combat with Bender, son and had been forced, in order to save his own life, to throw the man over the bluff.

Mrs. Lane sympathized with her daughter and was willing to do anything she could to aid the youth who had been captured, and thus do something for the cause of Liberty, but although they talked the matter over thoroughly they could think of nothing that they could do.

"There is one thing that I might do, mother," said Lucy, after a prolonged spell of silence.

"What, Lucy?"

"Go in search of Mr. Slater's men, the 'Liberty Boys.'"

"But you don't know where to look for them, do you?"

"I know about where to find them."

"You do?"

"Yes; he told me as we were talking, before father and the others came on the scene."

"Where are they, then?"

"He said he thought that they were about twenty-five miles behind him."

"Why were they behind him? Why didn't they stay with him?"

"Their horses were not so good as his and he came ahead. You see, they have come clear from New York State, and have ridden hard, and the horses ridden the rest of the 'Liberty Boys' are pretty well tired out."

"Oh, that is how it happened that he came on alone."

"Yes; he would have done better to stay behind with his Liberty Boys."

"Yes; but he didn't, so we must make the best of it. Do you think you can find the 'Liberty Boys'?"

"I can try."

"Well, I am willing for you to make the attempt as is the only chance for the young man, so far as I can see, and it would be terrible for him to be put to death."

"So it would; well, I will start as soon as father and the men lie down. I am afraid to start sooner, for if that father might ask for me, and then if I was not found he would be suspicious, for he knows that I gave Mr. Slater warning, and that I was aware of the fact that the patriot youth had thrown Bob Bender over the bluff."

"Yes; it will be best to wait."

"I think so."



The men became tired of talking, after a while, and lay down on blankets spread on the floor of the next room, and then Lucy slipped out of the house and made her way to the stable. She was used to horses and soon had Major bridled and saddled. She led the animal out of the stable and to the road, and then she mounted and rode away, going toward the north.

"Now I hope that I shall succeed in finding the 'Liberty Boys'!" she said to herself. "I will do my best, anyway, and that is all any one could do."

Major had had a good rest, and plenty of feed and water, and was ready to go; he galloped up the road without needing to be urged, and mile after mile was gone over.

On, on rode the brave girl. Up hill and down she went, for the country was rough and uneven. The night was a pleasant one, and the stars gave some light—enough to make the road visible even to the girl's eyes, so there was not much danger of getting lost.

Occasionally the girl brought the horse to a stop and listened intently. She was afraid she might meet a party of horsemen on the highway, and that would have been awkward, as she could not very well have explained where she was going, or why.

She was fortunate, however, in that she did not hear a sound of hoofbeats at any time that she stopped; and as it grew later her confidence grew stronger, for she reasoned that the later it was the less likely she would be to meet any one.

On rode the girl for several hours. She thought that it must surely be three o'clock, and that she had come a distance of twenty-five or thirty miles.

Surely I ought to come upon the camp of the 'Liberty Boys,' soon," she thought; "I hope that I have not passed without knowing it."

At this instant the girl was hailed from the roadside.

"Halt! Who comes there?" cried a loud and threatening voice.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE "LIBERTY BOYS" TO THE RESCUE.

the girl brought Major to a stop instantly and her horse came up into her throat. She wondered if the messenger was one of the "Liberty Boys," or whether he was a British soldier, or a Tory. There was only one way to find out, however, and that was by having an interview with the sentinel, and while she knew she was taking risks,

she felt that this was necessary and justifiable. So she answered, as bravely as she could:

"A friend."

"A friend, eh?"

"Yes."

"Advance, friend."

Lucy rode slowly forward until she found herself almost beside a man, who held a musket in his hands in such a manner that he could fire it off instantly, if such a course was necessary.

"By Jove! it's a girl!"

The exclamation burst from the lips of the sentinel, and the tone betrayed the fact that the owner of the voice was greatly surprised.

"Yes, it's a girl," said Lucy, scarcely knowing what to say, as she did not know whether she was in the presence of a friend or an enemy.

"Who are you, miss, and where did you come from?"

Lucy hesitated. She did not feel like answering questions till she was sure of her ground. If this was a "Liberty Boy" all would be well, of course; but he might not be a "Liberty Boy." Seeing that the girl hesitated, the sentinel went on:

"Don't be afraid to answer, miss; we don't make war on women or girls. Myself and comrades—the majority of us at least—have sisters, and many of us have sweethearts, and we are not the kind who would injure a lone and unprotected girl. Don't be afraid to speak."

Something in the tone of the speaker inspired the girl with a feeling of confidence, and she exclaimed, impulsively:

"Oh, sir, are you a 'Liberty Boy'?"

"Indeed I am!" was the prompt reply. "But how in the world do you happen to know anything at all about the 'Liberty Boys'?"

"Your commander, Dick Slater, told me about you," was the reply. Lucy was so delighted on account of having found the "Liberty Boys," that she had no hesitation in speaking out without reserve.

"What is that? Dick told you? Where did you see him? But hold on, I must not keep you here. I will call the officer of the guard and he will conduct you into the encampment."

The sentinel called out a name and soon a form loomed up in the darkness.

"What's the trouble, Tom?" asked a voice.

"Here is a young lady, Mark, who comes from Dick, and I think she has some kind of a message from him—is that right, miss?"



"Yes, yes! And I wish to see the one who is in command here, just as quickly as possible."

"This way, miss," said the youth who had been called Mark; "it is only a little way to the camp."

The girl rode at the youth's heels and was soon at the camp. It was already astir, for Mark had awakened some of the youths before going to where the sentinel was stationed. A fire suddenly blazed up, making quite a light, and the girl jumped to the ground to find herself the centre of a crowd of curious young men, with bronzed faces, out of which shone eager eyes.

"You wished to see the one in command here, miss?" asked a youth who had just entered the group.

"Yes, yes! Are you he?"

"I am; one of the boys said that you came here from Dick Slater."

"I did; I know where he is, and he is in great danger!" The girl spoke hurriedly, anxiously.

Exclamations escaped all.

"You say that danger threatens Dick?" asked Bob Estabrook, for he was in command, and was talking to the girl.

"Yes, indeed!"

"Where is he?"

"About twenty-five miles—maybe thirty from here—up in the mountains."

"What is the nature of the danger that threatens him?"

"Death at the hands of the Tories!"

"Death at the hands of Tories?"

"Yes."

"How do you know this?"

"I heard them say what they were going to do with him."

"But they will have to catch him, first."

"They have already done that."

"What!" exclaimed Bob. "You don't mean to say that they have Dick a prisoner?"

"Yes, they have him a prisoner."

"Great guns!"

"Dick has been captured!"

"He is in the hands of the Tories!"

"That is bad news!"

"Yes, but we must save him!"

"So we must!"

Such were a few of the exclamations and remarks.

"Did you see the Tories capture Dick?" asked Bob.

"Yes."

"Where was he when this took place?"

"In my father's house."

"In your father's house?"

"Yes."

"Then your father is——"

"A Tory—the leader of the Tories of this part of country, in fact."

"But you——"

"I am a patriot, as is my mother."

"Good! Three cheers for you, miss!"

"And for your mother, too!"

"That's right!"

"It is going to turn out a lucky thing for Dick that you are a patriot, miss!"

"And is Dick held a prisoner at your father's house now?" asked Bob.

"Yes, he is there now; but the intention is to put him to death early in the morning."

"To put him to death in the morning!"

"Yes."

"Well, they are not much for waiting; why should they be in such haste?"

"They are angry with him because he killed one of our leading Tories by throwing him over a bluff."

"Ah! that's it, eh?"

"Yes."

"But did he kill the Tory in that way?"

"Yes."

"Did you see it done?"

"I did; Mr. Slater was attacked by the Tory, and simply defended himself. It was his life or the Tory's, and he saved his own life, as was only natural."

"True; but the other Tories don't look at it in that light. They think that Dick's life should pay the forfeit. I suppose?"

"Yes; and the plan is to take Mr. Slater up to the top of the bluff and throw him over at the same spot where he threw the Tory over."

"Well, that's an original idea!" said Bob. "But I must put a stop to it—eh, boys?"

"Yes, yes!"

"We'll put a stop to it!"

"They shan't throw Dick over the bluff!"

"We will take a hand in that game and try to beat them."

"How long will it take us to get to your home, miss?" asked Bob.

"I don't know; but I think I was about five hours riding here."

"Five hours!"

"Yes; but I stopped frequently to listen, for I might encounter some British or Tories, and thus lose considerable time."



"What time is it now, I wonder?"

"It must be past two."

"Then if it takes us five hours to get to your home, it will be seven before we get there."

"Yes."

"Do you think there is danger that they will be stirring early as that?"

"They will just about be ready to start for the bluff, I should say."

"Then we haven't any time to lose!" exclaimed Bob.

"No, you had better hasten, for they might take Mr. Slater up to the top of the bluff earlier than I have said."

"We will have to hurry; quick, boys! Break camp, mount and away!"

The youths went to work and soon had rolled their blankets up and fastened them to the saddles. Then they bridled and saddled the horses, and fifteen minutes after Bob had given the order the entire force was riding up the road.

Bob and Lucy rode in front and the others were strung out behind. Bob wondered if the girl was sure of the road, and asked her if there was any danger that she might lose the way.

"I think not," was the reply; "still, it is possible that I might make a mistake. I will try not to do so, though, for that would be terrible. It might result in the death of Mr. Slater, for if we do not get there by at least seven o'clock I am sure we will be too late."

"Then we must get there that early—and earlier if possible."

"Yes, indeed!"

Onward rode the "Liberty Boys." There was no talk of any moment. All were busy thinking and wondering if they would get to their destination in time to save their young commander.

"How does it happen that you and your mother are patriots while your father is a Tory, miss?" asked Bob.

"I hardly know, sir," was the reply; "mother has two brothers, however, and they are both patriots, so I guess the desire for freedom is in the blood, and I have inherited it from my mother."

"I guess that is it; and it is indeed lucky for us that you and your mother are patriotically inclined."

"Yes, it is lucky—if we succeed in getting to my father's house in time."

"We must do that if we have to kill our horses by the way of riding."

"Yes, indeed; but, Mr. Estabrook, there is one favor I am going to ask."

"It is granted before you ask it; but what is it?"

"That you will not injure my father unless you are forced to do so in self-defense."

"As I said, Miss Lucy"—Bob had learned the girl's name—"your request is only natural and right, and we will observe your wishes in the matter. It would indeed be a poor return for your kindness to us if we were to kill your father."

"He is a Tory, and I do not approve of his ideas, or of many of the things he and the men under him have done, but he is my father, and, of course, I think a great deal of him."

"Naturally; well, we will not hurt him if we can help it, and I think we can."

Onward they rode, and after riding about two hours they came to a point where the road forked, and Lucy paused, puzzled. She did not know which way to go, whether to the right or to the left.

"I did not notice that there was another road as I came," she said, "and so did not pay much attention. Now it may prove to be a very serious matter."

"True," agreed Bob; "but I have an idea. Come up this road a distance of a quarter of a mile or so and then turn and ride back. Coming this way you will likely notice something that you will recognize as having passed in coming, if it is the right road. If you do not see anything that looks natural we will then try the other road in the same manner."

"That is a good idea," said Lucy, and she and Bob rode up the road a quarter of a mile, and then, turning, rode back to where the youths were waiting.

"Did you see anything that looked familiar?" asked Bob.

"No; everything seemed strange and unfamiliar. I don't believe that is the road I came."

"Well, let us try the other."

They rode up the other road a quarter of a mile, turned and came back, and when almost back to where the "Liberty Boys" were waiting for them an exclamation escaped Lucy's lips.

"There!" she cried. "See that big boulder? I am sure that I remember seeing it as I came."

"Good!" said Bob; "then this must be the right road."

"I believe it is."

"We'll risk it, anyway. You saw nothing that seemed familiar on the other road, and as this boulder seems familiar, you must have passed it."

"Well, it is something to go by, anyway, and is the best we can do; so we will take this road and trust to our good luck to find that we are on the right road."



Bob gave the order and they rode up the road in question. Lucy kept a sharp lookout, and by turning her head was enabled to see most everything as she must have seen it when riding in the other direction, but with the exception of the boulder she saw nothing that reminded her of anything that had attracted her attention while making the trip to the "Liberty Boys' " camp.

"I'm afraid that we took the wrong road, after all," she said, finally; "this road does not seem familiar."

"Oh, I rather think we are on the right road," said Bob, reassuringly; "keep watch and you will see something presently that you will remember having seen before."

But Lucy did not see anything that she remembered having seen before, and finally, when they came to a steep hill leading down into a deep ravine, the girl called a halt.

"I know we are on the wrong road now!" she said, decidedly, but in a tone of dismay. "I never came up any such hill as this in going to your encampment."

"Jove! that's bad news!" said Bob. "You are sure, Miss Lucy?"

"Yes, absolutely sure."

"But the boulder?"

"There must be one similar to it on the other road, and the resemblance deceived me."

"Well, then, there is only one thing to do and that is to right-about face and get back to the forks and take the other road."

"I guess that will be the only safe way, though it may not be half a mile across to the other road from here."

"It wouldn't be safe to try to find our way across through the timber."

"No, I think not; but it is terrible to think that this will cause us to lose more than an hour's time."

"So it will, but it can't be helped." Then Bob and Lucy turned their horses and rode past the "Liberty Boys," who also turned, and soon the party was galloping back toward the point where the road forked.

At last they reached there, and turning, rode up the other road; and they had not gone a mile before they passed a large boulder, which, in the faint light given by the stars, looked just like the one on the other road.

"You were right, Miss Lucy," said Bob; "there is the boulder you passed in coming."

"Yes, that is it."

There was silence for some time and then Bob asked: "Do you think that the loss of time will be sufficient to make us too late in reaching your father's house?"

"I don't know," was the sober reply.

"We'll get there in time or we'll kill our horses!" said Bob, grimly.

## CHAPTER VII.

DICK KICKS MOST EFFECTIVELY.

Dick Slater was not the youth to lie still and make no effort to save himself. He was no sooner left alone in the room than he began working at the rope which bound his wrists, in the hope that he might be able to free himself. If he could do this, he would risk being able to make his escape, as there was a window in the room, and he was certain that he could get through this, and away, even though there was a man on guard just outside the door.

He worked at his bonds steadily, but found that he was making little if any progress. The men who had tied the knots had had experience in that sort of work, evidently, and had done the work only too well.

"I am afraid that I can never get my wrists loose," thought Dick, with a feeling of dismay. Then he thought of Lucy.

"I don't see how she can aid me, though," he said to himself; "she dare not venture into the room—indeed, she could not do so as there is a man on guard. No, I do not see how I am to get out of this difficulty."

Still, much in the same way that a drowning man will clutch at a straw, Dick kept working at the rope which bound his wrists. When he had kept this up for two or three hours, however, and had not made any progress toward what he could be conscious of, even the iron-willed Dick Slater came to the conclusion that it was useless to use up his energy in this way.

"I think it will be as well for me to go to sleep, and get as good a night's rest as possible," he said to himself; "then, in the morning, when they go to put their plan into execution, perhaps I may be able to make a successful break for liberty."

Having so decided, Dick composed himself and went to sleep. This was a peculiar faculty, that of being able to dismiss all worries and fears and go to sleep under circumstances which would keep most persons wide awake and worrying. It was of great value to Dick, too, for it enabled him to be as fresh and strong next morning as were his captors, and they would have to be very careful not to give him any opportunities for escape.

When breakfast was ready at about half-past six o'clock



Mr. Lane told some of the Tories to bring the prisoner downstairs. Two of the men went upstairs and presently returned, bringing Dick, the bonds having been removed from his ankles.

"Kindly remove the rope from my wrists," said Dick, in a calm, matter-of-fact tone; "I wish to wash my face and comb my hair."

"Tie up his ankles again, boys," said Mr. Lane; "don't let him hev his arms an' legs free at her same time."

"What are you afraid of?" said Dick, in a scornful tone; "I should think that six of you would be able to take care of me even if my hands and legs were free."

"Thet's all right, Mr. Dick Slater; we hain't takin' no chances on ye," said Joe Lane.

"What are you afraid of?"

"We're erfraid ye might make a break fur liberty."

"Surely six of you, and all armed, ought to be able to take care of me if I should try that."

"Yas, we could stop ye; I don't doubt thet."

"Then why not let me be free from any bonds?"

"Waal, ye see, we don't want'er hev ter kill ye by shootin' ye! we want ter hev ther pleasure uv throwin' ye over ther bluff, ther same ez ye did Bob."

"Oh, that's it?"

"Yas."

Dick said no more, as he knew it would do not good; the men tied his ankles in such fashion that he could not go by going slowly, yet could not walk fast or run. Then they freed his wrists and he washed his face and hands and combed his hair. While doing this he looked around and wondered where Lucy was. "She must be a late comer," he thought. He little suspected what the brave man had done and was doing for him.

"Hain't Lucy got up yit, Betsy?" asked Joe Lane, and his wife shook her head.

"No, she hasn't come downstairs, at any rate," was the answer.

"Waal, mebby et's ez well fur her not ter cum downstairs ter we're gone," the man said. He knew that Lucy sympathized with the prisoner, and feared there might be trouble if the girl was on hand when the start was made on the bluff.

Joe now sat up to the table and ate breakfast. Dick, who was a close observer, and who knew the woman was in sympathy with him, noticed that she delayed the meal as long as she possibly could. She was slow in finishing her fast, and was slow in placing the food on the table, whenever any one asked for anything that was not on the table she was slow in getting it.

"Whut's ther matter, Betsy—air ye sick?" Mr. Lane asked.

"No, I'm not sick," was the reply.

"Humph! Ye act like et. Ye're orful slow movin', this mornin', fur some reason."

"There isn't any hurry, is there?" the woman asked.

"Waal, not thet I know uv, Betsy. Still, I'm kinder anxshus ter git at ther bizness which we hev afore us, an' hev done with et."

"Don't you think it would be better to not be in such a hurry in the matter, Joe?" the woman asked, somewhat timidly.

"I don't see no use uv waitin', Betsy. We know this heer young feller is Dick Slater, ther famous rebel; an' we know he throwed Bob over ther bluff, so theer hain't no reason why we sh'd wait. We might ez well put an' end ter 'im an' hev done with et."

"But you don't know that he threw Bob over, Joe."

"Yas, I do!" with an obstinate shake of the head.

"You didn't see him do it."

"I know thet, but theer hain't nobuddy else ez would hev done et."

"You are just assuming that I did it," said Dick; "you don't know it, and I don't think you ought to lay the death of the man at my door until you know absolutely that I was responsible for it."

"Waal, I'm sartin enuff uv et fur all pracktical purposes."

"I wouldn't be in such a hurry to act, if I were you, Joe," the woman said. "Wait till afternoon, anyway."

"Whut'd be ther sense in doin' thet? Bersides, even ef he didn't throw Bob over—which I'm shore he did—why, we know he is er rebel, an' ez sech he hez got ter die! We hain't got no use fur rebels down heer, an' we'll let 'em know et!"

The woman was about to say something more in protest, but Dick shook his head at her and said, smilingly: "Thank you, Mrs. Lane, but don't say anything more. It will do no good. Let them go ahead, and when my 'Liberty Boys' get here and learn that I have been put to death, they will make these men wish they had not done any such thing!"

"Bah! we hain't erfeerd uv yer 'Liberty Boys'!" said Joe Lane, scornfully. "We'll kill ever' mother's son uv 'em er drive 'em back up inter North Car'liny."

Dick smiled. "You will find that the 'Liberty Boys' are not easy to kill or to drive," the youth said.

"Thet's all right; they air only common humans, an' I guess we kin han'le 'em."



"You will find that they are rather uncommon, especially when it comes to fighting," was the quiet reply. "If you kill me I pity you and all the Tories of this vicinity."

"Oh, ye do, hey?"

"I do. My boys will not leave one of you alive!"

"They'll kill us all, hey?"

"They will."

"Waal, we'll risk et."

As soon as the meal was ended the men again bound Dick's wrists and then freed his ankles. The youth was almost on the point of resisting when they went to tie his wrists, but decided that it would be folly to do so as he could not get away, his ankles being bound.

Then the little party set out. Two of the men walked beside Dick and held to his arms so he could not make a sudden dash for liberty. As they were leaving, Dick turned his head and smiled at Mrs. Lane.

"Good-by," he said; "and I thank you for your kindness to me, and your good words for me."

"Good-by," said the woman, in a broken voice, and with the tears starting from her eyes she turned and ran into the house.

"Oh, how I wish Lucy had got here with the 'Liberty Boys'!" the woman said to herself. "I wonder why she has not got back? I am afraid that she failed to find them. Yes, I'm afraid that is the trouble, and that they will not get here in time to save that brave young man's life! I am so sorry—for I was in hopes that Joe would be prevented from taking part in the terrible affair. It seems to me but little better than murder!"

The woman waited till the party of men, with the prisoner in their midst, had reached the timber a quarter of a mile distant and disappeared from sight, and then she left the house and hastened out into the road and gazed up it eagerly and anxiously.

As far as she could see, there was no one in sight. But the road bent, just beyond the twin knolls, and it was impossible to see beyond that point.

"Oh, I hope and pray that Lucy and the 'Liberty Boys' may get there in time!" the woman murmured.

Meantime the Tories, with their prisoner in their midst, were making their way up the hill which terminated in the point known as the knoll, and where Benderson had met his death. It was rather steep, and made walking slow and difficult, so it took quite a while to get to the top.

This was accomplished at last, however, and the party came to a stop under the tree, which stood not far from the edge of the bluff.

"Waal, heer we air," said Joe Lane, grimly, and with a searching look at Dick to see how he was standing to the strain which it was certain he must be under.

"Yes, we are here," said Dick, calmly.

"Ye seem ter take et purty cool-like, young feller."

"Well, why not? What good would it do, to get excited and go to cutting up?"

"Et wouldn' do no good."

"That is what I know; so I save myself trouble don't do it."

"Theer hain't menny fellers ez would be able ter look at ther matter in thet light, though."

"Perhaps not."

"Oh, I know et. Mos' fellers, ef they wuz in yer shoo an' knowed thet a few minnets later they'd be tumbling over er bluff er hunderd feet high, would be beggin' for good fellers."

"Perhaps I would beg if I thought it would do any good, but I don't think so and so save myself the trouble."

"Thet's right an' sensible; fur et wouldn' do ye any uv good."

"That is what I think."

"An' ye think right; we air goin' ter throw ye over the bluff an' giv' ye er taste uv whut ye giv' poor Bob."

"Are you going to give me the same kind of a show Bob had?"

"How d'ye mean?"

"Why, his arms were free; are you going to free me before you throw me over?"

Joe Lane was silent for a few moments, pondering.

"I dunno whut ter say erbout thet," he said, presently. "Ye air er mighty dangerous feller, ef all thet I've heard erbout ye is so, an' I don' want er giv' ye enny chance to slip outer our han's an' make yer escape."

"There are six of you," said Dick; "how could I get away from you? You can handle me easily, if I am as foolish as to make any resistance."

"Yas, et does look ez ef we hed orter be able to handle thet."

"Certainly you will be able to hold me; I will be powerless. I hope you will decide to free my hands, I would hate to be thrown over with my hands tied. It makes a fellow feel so helpless-like, you know."

"But ye couldn't use yer han's arter ye go over, so the difference does et make?"

"I know I can't, but I will feel so much more comfortable and satisfied-like if my hands are free. It seems terrible to be thrown over with my hands tied."



Bob Benderson did not have his hands tied when he went over."

"That's so, uv course, but," pausing and thinking a few moments, "I don't like ter take no chances."

"You won't be taking any."

"Yas, we will—with sech er feller ez ye air said ter be. But I'll tell ye whut I'll do: I'll give ye yer choice between hev'in' yer han's er yer ankles tied."

"You are determined that I shall not be entirely free when I go over, then?"

"Yas; we kain't afford ter risk et."

"Then tie my ankles and let my hands be free. That don't seem quite so bad."

"All right; tie his ankles, boys, an' then free his han's."

The men went to work to do this, and while they were working Dick was covertly looking all around him in the hope that he might see something that would afford him a way even from the men who seemed determined to put him to such a horrible death.

It did not take the men long to do the work, and when they had finished Dick felt a little bit better; his hands were free, and he believed that if worst came to worst and he found that he would have to go over the bluff, he could take one of his enemies over with him.

"That will be some satisfaction," he said to himself. But Dick was in hopes that he might keep from going over the bluff; he had not yet given up all hope, slim as seemed his chances of escaping.

"Waal, Dick Slater," said Joe Lane, grimly, "I guess some time hez come fur makin' an end uv ye. I don't see wher is enny use fur us ter wait enny longer. Hev ennythin' ter say afore ye go over?"

"Nothing," replied Dick, calmly; "I might start in on a long-winded speech, but I don't suppose you would stand to listen to me very long, so what is the use of fooling?" "Theer hain't no use uv et, Dick Slater; but I mus' say I ink ye air erbout ther coolest, mos' sencerble feller ever I hev run ercross."

"Thank you," said Dick; "I always try to be sensible—who are they? Who are those men?" Dick pointed toward the timber and bushes which were twenty feet behind the backs of the Tories, and simulated surprise and was so successfully as to completely deceive the men. He thought there really was somebody there, and they started instantly with exclamations. As they did so, Dick sprang high in the air, and caught hold of a limb of the tree under which they were standing. The limb was as straight as a man's leg, and extended almost straight out at right angles with the body of the tree.

Dick, who was a splendid athlete, and had practiced such feats in the trees at home in New York State, when a boy, quickly and easily drew himself up and turned his feet and body up over the limb. He had executed this movement, and was out of reach of the Tories before they realized that they had been made the victims of a clever hoax, and then when they whirled and found their prisoner out of their reach, up in the tree, and beginning to climb upward with all possible speed, they gave utterance to exclamations of surprise and rage.

"Blazes!"

"Jes' look at ther young scoundrel!"

"He's er reg'lar monkey ter climb, hain't he?"

"Thet beats ennythin' I ever seen!"

"Thet won't do ye enny good!" called out Joe Lane; "ye kain't git erway from us."

"Oh, can't I!" was the reply.

"No; so ye might ez well come down."

"Thank you, but I prefer to remain up here!"

"Whut good'll et do ye ter make us trubble?"

"A good deal of good."

"I don' see et."

"I do."

"We kin bring ye down easy enuff."

"Can you?"

"Yas."

"I don't know about that!"

"Waal, I do; all we hev ter do is ter climb up and bring ye down."

"I'm going to climb clear up into the very top of the tree, and I pity the man that comes up within reach of my feet!"

"Whut'll ye do?"

"I'll kick him out of the tree!"

"Oh, ye will, will ye?"

"Yes."

"But see heer, young feller, whut good is all this goin' ter do ye?"

"A lot of good."

"I don' see et."

"I do."

"Waal, whut good'll et do ye?"

"Well, it will enable me to put off the unpleasant event which you were planning to have happen right away."

"Whut good'll puttin' et off do?"

"If you were in my place, I don't think you would ask that question," replied Dick, with a laugh. "I guess you would be glad enough to put it off even by so much as a minute."



"I don't think so; theer hain't no gittin' out uv et; ye hev ter go over, ennyway, an' I think thet ef I wuz in yer place I would want et done an' over with."

"Well, I don't look at it in that way. I prefer to postpone the unpleasant happening just as long as possible."

"Ef theer wuz ther least chance fur ye ter git out uv havin' ter go over by doin' ez ye air, et would be diff'rent; but theer hain't no chance uv et, an' so ye might ez well come down an' let us end et."

"Thank you; I don't think I shall do anything of the kind."

"Ye air er stubborn fool!"

"Thank you; you are a bigger fool, if you think I shall come down and let you throw me over the bluff. No, if you put me over the bluff it will be with me fighting to the last moment to prevent you from doing it. I have no desire to die, I assure you, and I am going to live just as long as I can."

"Waal, et won't be very much longer, I kin tell ye thet!"

"I'm not so sure of it."

"Ye hain't, hey?"

"No."

"Ye'll see; we'll hev ye down outer theer in er jiffy, an' then over ye go—an' we'll tie yer han's afore we throw ye over, too, ter pay ye fur this trick!"

"You'll have to get me down, first—and I don't believe you can do that in a hurry."

"I think we kin; ennyway, ye kain't git erway. Ye air in wuss shape than er treed 'coon, fur yer ankles air tied an' er coon's wouldn't be."

"Well, I can kick hard, and a 'coon couldn't."

"Thet's all right; I don' berleeve ye kin do enny hurt by kickin'."

"The only way is test the matter. I'll do some hurt if I can, you may be sure of that!"

"Heer, Bill, ye climb up inter ther tree an' bring thet sassy young rascal down!" said Joe Lane.

"All right," and one of the men stepped forward and began climbing the tree. All the time that Dick had been talking to Lane he had been working his way on up toward the top. Indeed, he had kept the man talking purposely so as to give him time and opportunity to do this. He knew that if he succeeded in reaching the extreme top of the tree he would be in much better position to offer resistance than if he was down in the middle of it. So he was in the top before the man called Bill had got started.

The Tory was a large fellow and muscular; he was evidently at home in a tree top, too, for he climbed rapidly

and with ease, and it was not long before he was w ten feet of Dick.

"Better stop and rest a while, Bill," said Dick, ca but meaningly.

"You think so?" was the reply.

"Yes; I don't think it will be a good plan for y try to get me down out of here while you are tired the exertions you have made in climbing."

"I guess you are as tired as I am."

"No, I have recovered and am feeling fresh and st Bill."

"Is thet so?" in a sneering tone.

"Yes."

"Waal, ye'll need ter feel thet way!"

"You think so?"

"Yas."

While talking the man was working his way up to Dick, with the intention, doubtless, of trying to seize of him before he was aware of what was taking place. Dick was on his guard. He had not worked so ha cause a postponement to let this fellow get the advan of him so easily.

"You had better keep back, Bill," he said, warni "if you come closer I shall be forced to give you a of the toe of my shoe!"

"Ye kick me, an' et won't be good fur ye!" the hissed.

"You try to catch hold of me and it won't be goo you!" retorted Dick.

For answer the Tory made a grab at Dick's ankles. was pretty close and thought that he could be successf getting hold of the youth.

He was mistaken, however. When he tried to seize I ankle, the ankle wasn't there. Dick was holding his w by his hands, and as the Tory made the grab the jerked his feet up out of the way. As the ankles tied together with a rope, Dick was handicapped to q considerable extent, but he was wonderfully strong i arms and this would make up for the handicap to extent.

That this was so was quickly proven, for the exclamation which Bill gave utterance to when he his grab was quickly changed to a yell of pain and as Dick swung his feet around and gave the fellow a kick full in the face, causing him to lose his hold his left hand and fall backward and downward.

The Tory was a good woodman, however, and ha a great deal of climbing in trees after 'coons and animals, and his experience in this way saved hi



he managed to break his fall by grabbing hold of limbs and went down. He was unable to stay his descent altogether, but he retarded his progress to such an extent that he finally emerged from among the lower limbs and down in the midst of his surprised comrades, he did strike very hard, and was shaken up somewhat, but injured.

"Great guns, Bill! What does this mean?" gasped Joe.

"Et means thet I fell outer ther tree!" growled Bill, in a surly way, for he was somewhat out of humor as was, of course, only natural."

"Er blin' man could see thet," growled Lane; "but how ye cum ter fall?"

"How did I cum ter fall?"

"Yas."

"Why, thet theer blamed rebel cuss kicked me outer ther tree?"

"Whut!"

"Ye don' mean et!"

"He kicked ye, ye say?"

"How could he do thet? His feet air tied tergether."

"He done et, all right."

"Ye don' see how he managed et," said Lane.

"It wuz easy enuff—fur him. He jes' pulled himself up with his han's when I made er grab at his ankle, an' he biff! he took me in ther face with both feet, an' he ed me head over heels!"

"Aazes!" from Lane. "He is er bad wun, hain't he?"

"Certainly is! Ef ye don' berleeve et jes' go up ther tree an' ckle 'im."

"Ain't no good at climbin', Bill."

"Well, I am purty good at climbin', but I don' like ther way cum down outer ther tree jes' now."

"Well, ye kin be on ther lookout fur 'im next time, Bill; jes' b up an' go fur 'im."

"I don' want all ther glory—an' work," said the man, in a sullenly; "jes' let wun uv ther other boys try et fur 'em."

"Go, Jack," said Lane.

The fellow addressed as Jack hesitated. It was evident he did not fancy the task.

"Are you, Bill?" called out Dick at this moment.

"You didn't break your neck when you struck the tree? I should grieve greatly if I were responsible for your coming off!"

Then looked at one another.

"Er cool wun, hain't he?" said the one called Bill.

"He should say he is!" agreed Lane; "he's too cool an'

sassy, altogether; an' I want et took outer 'im. Go on up, Jack, an' be keerful not ter let 'im git er chance ter kick ye, ez he did Bill."

"All right," was the reply; "I'll try it." And then the Tory started reluctantly forward and began climbing the tree. It was plain that he did not have much stomach for the task.

Up, up he climbed. He was not so expert as the other had been, and it took him longer; then, too, it may have been that he was not in a big hurry to get within reach of the feet of the "Liberty Boy."

At last he was within ten feet of Dick, however, and here he paused. Dick looked down and eyed the fellow. "So Bill got enough of it, did he?" the youth asked, with a smile.

"Yas, he got enuff uv et; but say, young feller, whut's ther use uv ye bein' stubborn? Ye've gotter cum down an' ye might ez well do et peaceable, an' be done with et."

"You are wasting your breath in making such talk as that," said Dick, scornfully. "If you are going to do anything, do it, but don't stop and fool away time trying to persuade me to come down and permit myself to be thrown to my death. You are a fool, and your entire gang is made up of the biggest kind of fools!"

"See here, ye tork altogether too sassy!" growled the Tory.

"You don't like it, eh?"

"No, I don'!"

"Well, why don't you make me stop, then?"

"I'm goin' ter."

"Oh, you are?"

"Yas; I'm goin' ter hev ye down outer theer in less'n three shakes!"

"I'm afraid it will take more than three shakes, my friend," was Dick's calm reply.

"We'll see!"

"Yes, so we will!"

Dick was watching the Tory closely and when the fellow was almost close enough to make a grab at his ankles the youth said, warningly:

"Now get ready for a quick trip to the ground, my friend! I'm going to send you down the same as I did Bill!"

"Oh, ye air, hey?"

"Yes."

The man tried to put on an air of bravado, but was not very successful.

"Ef ye kick me, like ye did Bill," he growled, "d'ye know whut I'll do?"



"No; what will you do?"

"I'll climb right back up erg'in, an'——"

"And what?"

"I'll put er bullet through ye—thet's whut I'll do!"

"Oh, that's it, eh?"

"Yas."

"Joe Lane won't let you do that."

"Yas, he will."

"I don't think so; he has set his heart on throwing me over the bluff, as I did Benderson."

"Thet's all right; but ef we kain't git ye down we'll hev ter shoot ye, fur we hain't ergoin' ter let ye 'scape us."

"But you can carry your point and finally succeed in throwing me over the bluff if you will wait."

"How is thet?"

"I will hev to come down after a while, or starve to death."

"But we hain't ergoin' ter wait thet long."

"Oh, you don't want to wait?"

"No; this thing hez got ter be ended this mornin'."

"Very well; go ahead, then. It doesn't matter what you do afterward, you may be sure that if you try to get hold of me I will kick you, and kick you hard. Perhaps by the time you hit the ground you will not be in a condition to climb up again and do the shooting. You may not be so lucky as Bill was."

This seemed to strike the man rather forcibly, and he hesitated to advance. While he was hesitating the voice of Lane came up:

"Go fur 'im, Jack! Don' let 'im skeer ye out. Grab 'im and bring 'im down!"

This seemed to encourage the fellow and he climbed on up till he was within reaching distance of Dick's ankles. He crouched down, however, and waited; he wanted to take his time and make sure of it before he grabbed.

Nearly a minute passed and the Tory remained in the crouching position; Dick watched him with the eyes of a hawk.

Seeing that he was being watched so closely that it would be impossible for him to get the advantage, the Tory finally decided to make the attempt, come what might, and he made a quick grab at Dick's ankles.

The youth was too quick for the Tory, however; he knew the man was going to make the grab as soon as the man himself knew it, and jerked his legs up out of the way. Then, quick as a flash he straightened the legs out, allowing himself to swing down as far as his arms would permit, and his feet struck the Tory a hard blow alongside the head—he turning his head just in time to save his face.

He did not save himself a fall, however, for the was such a strong one that the Tory was knocked head down through the tree. Crash! crash! he went, making wild grabs at limbs, and striking against limbs that he could not see, and being turned over and over. His descent was more rapid than that of Bill's had been, and he struck the ground much harder. Indeed, he saved his neck, being broken only by throwing out his hands and allowing the weight of his body to come on the arms; and one of them was broken.

"Air ye much hurt, Jack?" asked Lane, leaping forward, and assisting the man to a sitting posture.

"Got er broke arm, I guess!" was the sullen reply, and then his anger flared up and he hissed: "Skeer thet buddy go up an' put er bullet through thet feller!"

"No, no! we mustn' shoot 'im," said Lane; "we will throw 'im over ther bluff, ther same ez he done Bob."

"Waal, et's my notion thet ye'll hev hard work gittin' him down outer ther tree. He's er reg'ler demon, an' I don't berleeve ennybuddy kin git 'im down."

"Thet's whut I think, too," said Bill; "ef we keep tryin' ter do thet et'll end up in all uv us gittin' crippled, an' mebbby some uv us killed. He's er bad wun ter tackle, tell ye!"

"Ye think we kain't git 'im down?" asked Lane.

"Thet's whut I think."

"Then ther is on'y wun thing we kin do."

"Yer right, an' thet's ter shoot 'im!"

"Yas, thet's et; waal, ef so be's ther res' uv ye as shootin' uv 'im, now, w'y I won' say fur ye not ter liked ter throwed 'im over ther bluff, ther same ez ye done Bob, but ef we kain't do et, we kain't."

"Thet's right; an' we won't be able ter git 'im down outer thet tree without shootin' 'im; uv thet I'm cery sure."

"All right," said Lane; "shoot 'im et is! But ef he do et?"

"I will!" said Bill, promptly, a ferocious look on his face. "He kicked me, an' I think thet I hed orter to have pleasure uv puttin' ther bullet inter 'im."

"I guess yer right, Bill; ther privilege belongs to ye er ter Jack, an' ez he hez er broke arm an' can't climb, I guess et is ye who'll git ter do et."

"All right; ye bet I'll make ther cuss sing er tune, this time! We'll see ef he kin ketch er bullet keep et frum hurtin' 'im."

The fellow again began making his way up the tree, and it did not take him long to reach a point about ten feet below where Dick was stationed. The Tory pa



ew a pistol from his pocket. He held it up so that Dick  
ld see it, and then with a fiendish grin he said:

"Will ye come down, Dick Slater?"

Dick realized that that he was now in great danger. But  
did not let on that he realized it. He simply shook  
head and said:

"I most assuredly will not go down of my own accord."

"All right; ye air ther wun ter say. I wanted ter giv'  
wun more chance, an' then whut follers'll be yer own  
n's."

"I suppose you mean that you are going to shoot me?"  
ed Dick.

"Thet is jes' whut I mean."

"Well, I guess I can't help myself when it comes to  
t. When you tried to get hold of me I had some  
ee, but against a bullet I am helpless."

"Yer right. When I pull ther trigger et'll be all up  
in ye."

"Don't you think it a rather cowardly thing to do—  
oot a helpless man in this way?"

"Oh, I dunno; I don't think ye air so very helpless."

"This was said with such a wry face that in spite of the  
agty of the situation Dick could not help laughing.

Tory stared at the youth wonderingly.

"ay, d'ye know, I think ye air ther blamedest feller  
ever I see!" he remarked. There was admiration in  
ne.

"o, is that so?"

e as."

te hat makes you think that?"

ez'y, ther way ye take things—so cool and ca'm-like.

r seen nothin' like et in all my life, an' I wouldn't

'im relieved thet ennybuddy could be at death's door an'

m cool an' ca'm an' even laff, like ye hev jes' done."

"I have been so used to danger that I don't think  
ng about it," said Dick.

ook et's et, hey?"

ter f."

al, I guess ye wuz never in sech danger ez ye air  
t now."

ngs haps not," calmly; "it does look sort of blue for  
an' sn't it?"

g er does, fur er fack. Yer doomed, Dick Slater, an'

er b hates ter shoot ez brave er feller ez ye hev proved

ter be, still, ez ye air er rebel, an' ez ye killed Bob

on, an' kicked me an' Jack outer ther tree, I guess

up ther hain't no other way uv doin'—so git reddy,

abot eller! Ef ye hev enny pra'ers ter say, say 'em

ry pa

Dick did not make reply. He was watching the Tory  
as if fascinated. He saw the man cock the pistol and level  
it full at his head; he saw the man take aim, and had just  
about given up all hope of escaping from this terrible  
danger when there was a loud yelling from below, in the  
voices of the Tories, followed instantly by the ringing  
cheers in the voices which Dick knew so well—the voices  
of "The Liberty Boys of '76!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### MARION, THE "SWAMP FOX."

"Hurrah! My 'Liberty Boys' are here!" cried Dick.  
"I am saved, after all!"

"We'll see erbout thet!" hissed the Tory, and with the  
words he fired.

The exclamation had given Dick warning, however, and  
he threw his head around behind the limb just in time, for  
the bullet missed him by at least six inches.

With an exclamation of rage and disappointment the  
Tory stuck the pistol back in his belt and began making  
his way down out of the tree as rapidly as possible.

"We'll git ye yit, Dick Slater!" he called back; but Dick  
only laughed. "The youth felt so good over his wonderful  
escape that he had no fears of what might happen in the  
future.

"I'll see to it that they don't get me at such a disad-  
vantage another time!" he said to himself.

He started to descend and was almost as fast as the  
Tory. When the latter dropped to the ground and started  
to run away, Dick was almost ready to drop to the ground,  
and thinking that the fellow might be captured, he called  
out:

"Seize that fellow, boys! He's a Tory; don't let him  
get away!"

There came cries from a little ways down the side of  
the hill.

"We'd like to catch him, but can't."

"It's Dick!"

"Yes, alive—hurrah!"

"We are in time, after all!"

"We've saved Dick, and that's the main thing."

Dick dropped to the ground, and as he did so the  
"Liberty Boys" came over the brow of the hill, and were  
beside him and all around him in a jiffy.

"How are you, old man?"



"Did they hurt you?"

"What were you doing up in the tree?"

"Great guns! your ankles are tied!"

The last from Bob, who instantly stooped and cut the rope binding the youth's ankles.

"How in the world did you boys happen to get here so opportunely?" asked Dick in his turn. And then he suddenly caught sight of Lucy Lane, and it flashed upon him.

"Miss Lucy!" he cried. "You went and brought the 'Liberty Boys'!"

"That's what she did, Dick," said Bob; "and if she hadn't done it I guess it would all have been up with you, eh?"

"It certainly would, Bob! I was just about at the end of my rope when you put in an appearance."

Then as Lucy reached his side he greeted her pleasantly. "I owe you my life, Miss Lucy," he said, feelingly; "and I am not likely to soon forget it."

The girl blushed and looked pleased. "I was only too glad to do something to aid you," she said; "and I don't think you owe me any thanks, for it was my father who was threatening to kill you, and I wished to save you from him. I felt that it was my duty to do so, and one does not deserve thanks for doing one's duty."

"You did not owe it to me to save me, simply because your father was one of my enemies, Miss Lucy; you are a brave and noble-hearted girl, and I am proud to know that you are a patriot."

"So are we all!" said George Saunders, who seemed to have taken a great liking to Lucy.

"Yes, yes!" was the chorus from the youths; "we are all proud of Lucy, the girl patriot."

And again the girl blushed with pleasure.

Then Bob told Dick how Lucy had come to the encampment at three o'clock that morning and had told them that Dick's life was in danger, and how they had mounted in hot haste, and had ridden as fast as possible. He told how they had taken the wrong road and lost an hour's time, and how they had gone back and taken the right road, and had finally reached the scene in time to save Dick's life.

"You would not have got here in time if I had not managed to escape from the hands of the Tories and climb up into the top of the tree, though," said Dick; "the loss of the hour would have been fatal. But as it turned out, it was all right."

Then Dick told how he had managed to get out of the hands of his enemies and climb up into the tree, and how he had kicked two of the Tories out of the tree top and sent them tumbling to the ground.

The youths laughed heartily.

"That is the best thing I've heard lately!" said I grinning. "I would have liked to have been here and the Tories come tumbling down."

"So would we all!" said Mark Morrison.

"I guess I had better hasten home," said Lucy; "I want father to know what I have done, and if I hurry slip into the house unseen he may not know my agent in the affair."

"Very well; go along, Miss Lucy," said Dick. "We want to see you get into trouble, after all you have for me."

"I guess I will see you again?" the girl asked, hesitatingly. "You are not going away immediately?"

"No," replied Dick; "we will probably be in this vicinity several days. I have been informed that Marion Sumpter are in this part of the country, and I will stay here till I find one or both of them."

"Good! then I will see you again. If you camp near I may see you again to-night."

"We shall be only too glad to see you, Miss Lucy."

Then the girl hastened away, going in the direction of her home, while the "Liberty Boys" made their way down the hill to the road, where they had left their horses.

Here they were treated to a surprise, for they found a party of rough-looking men standing guard over the road. At first glance the youths thought the men were Tories, but at the second glance Dick recognized the leader of the party and exclaimed:

"Marion, the 'Swamp Fox'!"

## CHAPTER XI.

### MAKING IT LIVELY FOR THE REDCOATS.

It was indeed Marion, the famous Southern commander, and this was his little band. There were about sixty men, yet they were men who could and would do like demons whenever the occasion demanded, and the redcoats and Tories who had come in contact with them could testify that such was the case.

"I'll declare if it isn't Dick Slater and his 'Liberty Boys'!" said Marion, a pleased look on his face. "I wonder if it will happen that you are down here in South Carolina."

"We were sent down here by the commander," replied Dick.

"Sent here, eh?"



Yes."

For what purpose?"

To co-operate with you, sir."

Ah!" The face of the "Swamp Fox" lighted up. And with Sumpter, Pickens and Williams."

I see; and what were we to try to do?"

I had a letter explaining everything, but it was taken from me by some Tories; I can, however, tell you in a few words."

Do so."

Very well; the idea was that we should work together, organize a patriot militia."

I see."

What do you think of the idea?"

I think it a good one; the redcoats and Tories have been carrying things with altogether too high a hand in this part of the country for a long time."

Tell, myself and 'Liberty Boys' are at your service, and are ready to do whatever you say."

General Marion was silent for a few moments, and then "You say the letter which the commander-in-chief took away from you by a Tory?"

Yes, sir."

Who was the Tory?"

He is a Mr. Lane."

"Swamp Fox" nodded. "I know him," he said; "he is the leader of the Tories in these parts, and lives over the hill, yonder."

Yes, that is the man."

He has a patriot wife and daughter."

You are right, sir; the girl was the means of saving me last night."

How was that?" with an air of interest.

I told the story of his capture, and how the girl had been almost all night long, and had brought the "Liberty Boys" to his rescue.

She is a noble-hearted girl," said Marion; "it is too bad that her father is a Tory. I should dislike very much to hate him, as, even though he is a Tory, his wife and daughter love him."

You are right, sir; I think it would be ill requitment for me to injure Mr. Lane, after what his daughter has done for me."

I would; but we will remain in this vicinity and wait for a chance to strike his band a blow."

Marion was decided to seek out a good place and go into the woods until this was done. They had not much more than reached their camp, however, before a scout, who had been sent behind at the road, came running in with the

information that a party of redcoats was coming down the road from the north.

"How many of them are there, do you think?" asked the "Swamp Fox."

"There are quite a lot of them—one hundred, I should say, at a rough guess."

"Very good," said Marion, rubbing his hands; "we have one hundred and sixty men, and with the advantage of ambushing the redcoats we should be able to practically exterminate this force that is coming."

"I should think so," agreed Dick.

The order was at once given for the combined forces to move, and the order was obeyed instantly; only a few men were left at the encampment—just enough to look after the horses.

The road was soon reached, a good point for the ambush was selected, and all concealed themselves.

Soon the party of redcoats was in sight. On it came, the men suspecting nothing. They were riding right into a death-trap and did not know it.

On they came, nearer and nearer. The signal was given to the "Swamp Fox's" men and to the "Liberty Boys" to get ready, and they did so. With cocked muskets held in readiness, they waited for the enemy to come abreast their hiding place before firing.

At last the redcoats were abreast the ambush; and then General Marion gave the order to fire.

Crash! Roar! The volley rang out loudly, and a deadly volley it was, for half the total number of redcoats were unhorsed and fell to the ground.

The scene that ensued defies adequate description. The redcoats who were uninjured were frightened and angry, and yelled and cursed and spurred their horses this way and that; while from the wounded went up cries of pain and curses, the riderless horses rearing, kicking and plunging, and stepping on the wounded and adding much to the terrors and horror of the situation.

It was indeed horrible, but it was war, and Marion was merciless. "Fire again—with pistols!" he cried, and another volley rang out.

Considerable damage was inflicted, this time, but not so much as the first, of course; but on the heels of the second volley was a third, and then the voice of Marion was heard crying:

"Charge them! Charge the scoundrels and kill every one of them! Don't leave one alive to carry the story to the British army!"

Then, with a wild cheer, the combined forces—Marion's



and the "Liberty Boys"—rushed forward and attacked the remnant of the British force, fiercely.

So demoralized were the redcoats that they did not attempt to show fight at all, but their efforts were all directed toward getting out of danger in the quickest possible time. They put spurs to their horses and dashed away down the road, leaving three-fourths of their number lying dead or wounded in the road behind them.

It was a glorious victory, and the victors gave utterance to cheer after cheer. Not a single member of the attacking party had been wounded. It was a splendid victory. Many of the "Swamp Fox's" men were short of weapons, and they helped themselves to those of the dead redcoats. When they had secured what they wanted, Marion gave the order for the return to the encampment.

"The wounded redcoats will be looked after presently by their comrades or by the Tories," he said; "they are in a part of the country where the majority of the people are their friends; so we need not worry about them."

"That's right," coincided Dick.

Then the allied forces returned to the encampment.

Thinking it possible that the redcoats and Tories might hunt them out and attack them, a guard was put out, but the day passed without any signs of the enemy having been seen—excepting that a scout, who had remained where he could watch the scene of the late encounter, came into camp and said that the wounded redcoats had been taken away by their comrades, and the dead ones buried.

"They were an angry lot of men, I tell you!" the scout said. "The way they talked of what they would do to us is a caution. They talked loudly, too, so as to make themselves heard, if any of us were around."

"I have an idea there was a strong force of Tories hidden near by," said Marion; "the redcoats wanted us to make an attack and then the Tories would have attacked us."

"Quite likely that was the case," agreed Dick. "Well, they got fooled."

The day passed and evening came. The men ate their frugal supper, and when it had come on dark Dick was just getting ready to go on a scouting expedition when the sentinel challenged some one. A few minutes later Lucy Lane entered the camp.

She was given a royal welcome by the "Liberty Boys," though they did not, of course, utter any cheers, as it would have been dangerous.

Lucy was introduced to General Marion by Dick, and then she told why she had come.

"You are to be attacked, to-night," she said.

"We are to be attacked?" remarked Marion.

"Yes, sir; some of the Tory scouts have been out the day searching for your encampment, and one of them found it this afternoon. I heard him tell father where the encampment was, and that is how I knew when to come."

"I see," said Dick; "and how large a force have the Tories?"

"About two hundred men, counting the twenty-five coats who were not killed in the engagement this morning."

"That is quite a respectable number of men," said Marion; "and do you know what time in the night they intend to strike us?"

"About midnight."

"Very good; we will know when to look for them. We will try to be ready for them."

"Does your father intend to lead the force, Miss Lane?" asked Dick.

The girl nodded. "He intends to do so," she said. "I don't think he will."

"How will you keep him from doing so?"

"Mother is going to pretend to be taken suddenly and violently ill about ten o'clock," was the reply; "and I think father will stay at home and let the British command the force."

"That is a good plan," said Dick; "and I hope it will succeed, for we don't want to injure your father. If he were to come we could not distinguish him in the darkness and would as likely as not kill him."

"I think we will be able to keep him at home," said Marion.

She did not remain in the encampment very long. She was afraid her absence from home might be noticed, and that suspicions might be aroused; so bidding good night to Dick and General Marion, she took her departure.

It happened that the sentinel who had challenged her as she came and whom she had to pass on leaving, was George Saunders, and he managed to keep the girl fifteen minutes by engaging her in conversation. The girl was very much taken with the beauty of the girl, and he had never been so happy in all his life as he was when talking to her. As George was a brave, manly fellow, and had managed to get noticed by Lucy during the time the "Liberty Boys" were riding when coming to Dick's assistance, Lucy was anxious to talk to him; the truth was she was somewhat tired, and when he half fearfully said to her that he was starting away, "When the war is over I'll be back down here for you, Lucy!" and she replied,



seemed somewhat, "Oh, you'll forget me long before that time," the youth's cup of happiness was filled to overflowing, and he leaped forward, forgetful of military wind discipline, and, letting his musket drop, seized her in his arms and kissed her again and again.

"Do not forget, Lucy, little sweetheart!" he murmured. "Do not forget! Just as sure as I am alive, when the stars I'll come for you. You will wait for me, Lucy?" "Yes, I'll wait, George," was the low-spoken reply, and the girl hastened away into the night, leaving the "Liberty Boy" the happiest young fellow in all South Carolina.

He stared after the girl for a few moments, in dreamy reverie, and then picked up his musket and resumed his post as sentinel.

As Le forewarned is to be forearmed. Having received information that an attack was to be made at midnight it was an easy matter to make arrangements for the defeat of the enemy that were likely to have considerable demoralizing said enemy. Marion was an old soldier, up to all the tricks, and Dick was not second to "Swamp Fox" in this respect, young as he was, and it was that a plan was put into effect which was to be the undoing of the redcoats and Tories.

The enemy knew where the encampment was and would march directly to it; well, it would be an easy matter and a good one to roll up the blankets and leave them lying on the ground in the encampment, and in the darkness they would look like human forms. The redcoats and Tories would rush upon the rolled-up blankets, fire upon them, and make an attack on them with bayonets, while the "Liberty Boys" and their allies would attack the enemy from the side and would surprise them and easily put them to rout.

The plan was followed out and worked like a charm. The redcoats and Tories thought they were taking the enemy at a disadvantage, and attacked the rolled-up blankets with great fury, and then, just as they discovered that had been played on them, they were given a volley from one hundred and sixty rifles and at least fifty went down, dead and wounded, almost before the redcoats and Tories knew the direction the enemy was coming from, they were

treated to two pistol volleys and then on top of that came the loud command:

"Charge! Give them the bayonet! We'll teach them how to try to surprise and massacre honest men. Charge!"

This was too much for the nerves of the enemy, and the redcoats and Tories fled at the top of their speed, with loud yells of terror. Many threw away their weapons in order to be able to run faster. The rout was complete.

The victorious patriots humanely did what they could for the wounded men, and when morning came sent them under flag of truce to the home of Mr. Lane. The dead redcoats and Tories they gave burial to, and then Dick and General Marion began laying their plans for organizing a patriot militia. Sumpter and his men luckily put in an appearance that afternoon and he was delighted with the idea and soon messengers carried the word to Pickens and Williams, and the work was pushed rapidly. Quite a little army was raised in a few weeks' time, and the allied forces, with the little army of militiamen, made things exceedingly lively for the redcoats and Tories of South Carolina.

It had indeed been a bold move of the "Liberty Boys" in coming down into South Carolina—"into the enemy's country"—but it was a successful move, and turned out well, and all was well.

## THE END.

The next number (78) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS' BEACON LIGHT; OR, THE SIGNAL ON THE MOUNTAIN," by Harry Moore.

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